Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 299 | TUESDAY DECEMBER 15, 2009 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

Fitial eyes Cepeda's re-appointment to NMC board. **PAGE 3**

DPH to ask for extension of emergency declaration. **PAGE 6**

$1.35M earmarks for NMI now up for Obama's signature

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The fate of the $1.35 million in CNMI special projects funding requested by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) now rests with President Obama, after the conference report on the omnibus Fiscal Year 2010 spending bill cleared the U.S. Senate on Sunday.

Sablan's request for $1.35 million to fund seven programs and projects is contained in the Conference Report on Fiscal Year 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, a $447-billion spending measure for several Cabinet departments and other agencies for the 2010 budget year.

On a mostly partisan vote of 57-35, the Senate approved the compromise omni-

See OBAMA on Page 4

Fitial: Ombudsman shouldn't accommodate 'overstayers'

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Reynaldo Garcia, left, a volunteer for the Federal Labor Ombudsman's Office, assists in receiving copies of passports from nonresident workers whose last names start with A and B yesterday afternoon, as part of the ongoing "accounting" of nonresidents in the CNMI. The federal agency's office is located at the Marina Heights II Building in Puerto Rico.

RELATED NEWS

- First day of 'accounting' process fast and easy. **PAGE 2**

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial expressed concern yesterday about the Federal Labor Ombudsman's ongoing "accounting" of nonresident workers in the CNMI, saying such process should not be used to allow the continued stay on the islands of foreigners with no legal status to remain here.

See OVERSTAYERS on Page 4

OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Should NMC revisit its policy of allowing the termination of NMC employees without cause?

Let your voice be heard!
Go to
www.saipantribune.com
to cast your vote.

Immigration FORUM

Maya Kara

Bruce Mailman

Starting with today's issue, the *Saipan Tribune*'s Opinion page will feature the Immigration Forum column of lawyers Maya Kara and Bruce Mailman.

Their columns, scheduled every Tuesday, will provide practical advice and plain English explanation of the changes ongoing in immigration law—a public service intended to address the current lack of public education on the practical applications of these changes.

Both Mara and Mailman have lived and practiced law in the CNMI for over 20 years, Kara in government service and Mailman in private practice. Kara is also the president of the CNMI Bar Association.

Read their column every Tuesday on Page 10-11 of the *Saipan Tribune*.

Page 10

AHEAD OF DEC. 28 DEADLINE

Pai

Only 8 of 110 file campaign reports

First filer didn't spend money for campaign

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Only eight of the 110 certified candidates in the Nov. 7 general elections have so far filed their campaign statement of account with the Office of the Public Auditor, barely two weeks before the Dec. 28 deadline.

Public Auditor Michael Pai told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that Board of Education vice chair Herman T. Guerrero was

See CAMPAIGN on Page 4

Police uncover fake car crashes

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Police have uncovered an auto shop owner's scheme of staging fake vehicular crashes after investigators noticed that the statements of the two drivers in one incident were not consistent with the damage to their vehicles.

Mohammed Abu B.S. Munshi, 34,

See FAKE on Page 4

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Local

First day of 'accounting' process fast and easy

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Federal Ombudsman's first day of the "accounting" process on Saipan yesterday turned out to be fast and easy for alien workers.

With the help of United Workers Movement Inc. volunteers, the Federal Ombudsman's staff began the registration of alien workers having last names starting with A and B at 4pm without causing long lines at the Marina Heights II Building.

The volunteers, supervised by the Ombudsman's staff, distributed registration forms to the workers and helped them in filling up the documents in three separate areas outside and inside the Marina Heights II Building where the Ombudsman's Office is located.

Federal Ombudsman staff refused to comment about the registration process. Ombudsman Pamela Brown was not available when *Saipan Tribune* visited the registration site yesterday at 4pm.

United Workers Movement Inc. president Rabby Syed said the volunteers helped workers fill up the forms and put together the requirements such as copy of passports or receipts of passports' renewal.

Syed said they offered assistance to the Ombudsman's Office so the registration operation would be smooth and organized.

"We want to avoid the long lines and cause a hard time for the alien workers. We had a bad experience in getting the 'umbrella permits.' We're making it's more convenient to the workers," he said.

The group even provided ballpoint pens and pencils to the workers.

Syed said they will also coordinate with the Ombudsman's Office in putting up a support center at the Fiesta Filipino Restaurant in front of Saipan Grand Hotel in Susupe this Saturday and Sunday, from 9am to 5pm.

At the support center, Syed said, they will be accepting registration forms for those with no means of transportation.

Saipan Tribune learned that some alien workers began arriving at the Ombudsman's Office as early as 2pm yesterday.

Ombudsman staff and the volunteers entertained the workers outside the building and at the stairs on the first floor to prevent crowding at the Ombudsman's Office on the second floor.

Lorenzo Pamfilo, 60, a building maintenance, said he arrived at 4pm and was already done after 5 minutes.

"It is fast and easy because many people are assisting us," Pamfilo said in Tagalog.

Evangelina Barbuco, 50, a commercial cleaner, said she is very happy because she was done with the registration in two minutes. Barbuco said it took her three visits to the Department of Labor just to get the "umbrella permit."

"At Labor, after falling in line they asked me to go to the second floor, then asked me to go back to the first floor again. On my third visit, I almost fainted because I fell in line at 6am and got the permit at 9am. I was so hungry," she said in Tagalog.

Saipan Tribune learned that the Ombudsman's Office already completed the registration on Tinian last Friday and on Rota last Saturday.

There were about over 1,500 alien workers who registered on Tinian and over 700 on Rota. The "accounting" process on the two islands was completed smoothly, a source disclosed.

Bridge Capital donates $31,500 to 9 schools, groups

Firm plans to venture into power generation, agriculture in CNMI

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Bridge Capital LLC chief executive officer John K. Baldwin, second from left, hands a $5,000 check to first lady Josie Fitial while Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, second from right, and other officials of Bridge Capital and the foundation look on during a ceremony yesterday on Capital Hill to present a total of $31,500 to nine schools and organizations in the CNMI.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Bridge Capital LLC chief executive officer John K. Baldwin, seated-left, and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, seated-center, pose with representatives of nine schools and organizations who were recipients of Bridge Capital's $31,500 donations yesterday on Capital Hill.

Christmas came early to nine schools and organizations in the CNMI with Bridge Capital LLC's donation of $31,500 yesterday, bringing to $59,500 the international investment banking firm's donations to the local community this year.

Bridge Capital chief executive officer John K. Baldwin, at the same time, said his firm is "increasingly interested" in agriculture, as well as power generation projects.

Agricultural projects being looked at include those involving sugar, eucalyptus wood, and acacia wood.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, who witnessed Bridge Capital's presentation of check, said the administration looks forward to working with the private agency in pursuing its projects.

Baldwin, in an interview with reporters, said it's company policy to giving to the community a part of what the firm makes. He said Bridge Capital, which is headquartered in the CNMI, wants to help its own "home."

He led other Bridge Capital officials in presenting the checks to the following entities:

- Marianas High School, $10,000;
- Oleai Elementary School, $5,000;
- San Jose Church, $2,500;
- Autism Society of the CNMI, $5,000;
- First Lady's Vision Foundation, $5,000;
- Northern Marianas College Nursing Club, $1,000;
- Friends of the Arts, $1,000;
- Pet Assistance and Welfare Services, $1,000; and
- CNMI Council for Humanities (Motheread/Fatheread Program), $1,000.

Except for the NMC Nursing Club, all other recipients of the donations were present at the brief ceremony held in the Governor's Conference Room on Capital Hill.

First lady Josie Fitial and other representatives of recipient groups thanked Bridge Capital for its donations.

Jon Anderson, senior asset manager and public relations officer of Bridge Capital LLC, said the company prioritizes support to entities working toward promoting health and education.

Baldwin said Bridge Capital also responds to requests for donations.

"For this year, Bridge Capital donated close to $60,000," he said, referring to the $28,000 in donations made earlier this year, and the $31,500 yesterday, totaling $59,500.

Bridge Capital also earlier proposed to revitalize the long-vacant La Fiesta Mall in San Roque by investing a minimum of $5 million in the facility to operate video lottery games, along with restaurants, shops and other tourist attractions.

But as of yesterday, Baldwin said Bridge Capital is still negotiating with the CNMI government on this project. It was the only entity that responded to the government's request for proposal to revitalize the La Fiesta property.

Tourism Tuesday

A weekly update from the Marianas Visitors Authority

Tourism is everybody's business.

SBS Junior Golf Academy

This month the **Marianas Visitors Authority** collaborates with **SBS Golf of Korea** to promote the Northern Marianas as a premier golf destination with the **SBS Junior Golf Academy.**

The academy, started in October 2009, targets parents interested in providing golf instruction for their children who are preparing to become professional golfers. This month, 23 young golfers are under the tutelage of seven instructors at **Laolao Bay Golf Resort,** with the top 14 winners of the academy tournament receiving a package to Rota including airfare, an island tour, and golf at **Rota Resort & Country Club.**

Through this event, the Northern Marianas will receive exposure to golf enthusiasts on SBS Golf website, with a special pop-up page for the island of Rota.

HAFA ADAI & TIROW WAY

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

This Tourism Tuesday space is provided by Saipan Tribune

Ex-principal blames Ladera school owner for depression

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A former principal of Ladera International School of Saipan is suing the school's owner for allegedly subjecting him to verbal abuse that caused him to suffer a major depression.

Richard Louis Nigh sued Yong Nam Park in federal court for intentional infliction of emotional distress, negligent infliction of emotional distress, and loss of consortium.

Nigh, through counsel Loren A. Sutton, asked the U.S. District Court for the NMI to order Park to pay him $140,000 in damages plus $50,000 in attorney's fees and court costs.

Saipan Tribune tried but failed to obtain comments from Park.

Nigh, who has taught English in Japan for 27 years, was hired in July 2007 to become Ladera's principal. His contact began on Aug. 1, 2007. Sutton said that Nigh's dealings with Park seemed okay up to October 2007, when the relationship began to deteriorate. On Oct. 15, 2007, Nigh received an e-mail from the defendant stating "the honeymoon is over."

"Park's willful and outrageous treatment of plaintiff began to worsen with many sessions of yelling and criticism and Park began to be very aggressive toward Nigh, yelling at him on a daily basis and criticizing him for unforeseeable incidents on campus," the lawyer said.

By the middle of December, Nigh could not take it anymore and resigned from the position.

Nigh's two teenaged sons were then students at Ladera and after he resigned, were allegedly subjected to many indignities. Sutton said most of this poor treatment came from the new principal's sons and from Park's children.

On Jan. 27, 2008, Nigh went to the Community Guidance Center and saw a counselor in the second week of February 2008. A CGC counselor advised Nigh he was suffering from major depression and that he would need further treatment and stress management classes. A psychiatrist also diagnosed Nigh with major depression in April 2008.

Sutton said the psychiatrist told Nigh his condition was life threatening and was most probably the result of his treatment during his employment by his employer.

Sutton said that in January 2009 Nigh's condition slowly improved.

Sutton said Ladera only began operations in 2006, yet it already had three principals who had all quit the job. Nigh said he found out that these principals quit due to the ill treatment they received from the school administration.

Fitial eyes Cepeda's re-appointment to NMC board

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy Inos disclosed that they want the former chairman of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents back on the institution's governing panel.

Fitial told *Saipan Tribune* that Charles V. Cepeda is being eyed for re-appointment to the position.

In a Dec. 3 memorandum, the governor reappointed Cepeda for another term as regent, subject to Senate confirmation.

Cepeda confirmed yesterday that he was notified of the re-appointment and he is now in the process of completing some documents.

When asked if this means he has already accepted the re-appointment, Cepeda admitted he is set to meet with the governor and the lieutenant governor to discuss this matter.

"I did receive the [re-appointment] letter from the Office of the Governor…and we are scheduled to sit down and talk about it," Cepeda said.

Cepeda

Both Fitial and Inos admitted Saturday that they have some "concerns" about NMC but did not elaborate.

An unusual number of employees have been terminated or their contracts not renewed. The latest on the list is long-time instructor Sam McPhetres, whose contract was not renewed for unknown reasons.

Many employees who have been let go had spoken out against NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez. Eight various grievances pertaining to personnel and contract issues were filed with the college last semester.

Cepeda was the Board of Regents chairman when Fernandez was first hired and when her contract was extended for four years. He was also the chairman when the board voted to accept the resignation of regent Agnes McPhetres, despite the governor's rejection of the member's resignation.

Cepeda refused yesterday to comment on concerns now facing NMC and the board.

"Since I've not officially been back on the board, I cannot comment on concerns about the board or NMC," he said.

Cepeda's term expired on Nov. 14. If he accepts the re-appointment, he will serve until 2013, representing Saipan.

Other members of the seven-member board are Maria Malua Peter, Frank Rabauliman, Andrew Orsini, Janet King, Paz Younis, and Elaine Orilla.

Charter flights' uncertainty won't scuttle Air Saipan plans for CNMI

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Despite some current charter flight uncertainties on island, a ranking official and investor of the planned Air Saipan stressed that their business partners are committed to pursue operating the new airline next month.

"It is with sadness we saw the loss of income to the islands due to charter flight uncertainty. While we are a little concerned about the new immigration status, our Chinese partners see no reason not to go ahead and make the airline a reality for CNMI," Air Saipan chief executive officer William Chen told *Saipan Tribune*.

On Jan. 10, airline officials and representatives will meet with Lufthansa Consulting and will head to Saipan to start business negotiations. Lufthansa will serve as the firm's consultant for CNMI operation.

The meeting is slated next month at the Hyatt Regency Saipan, according to Chen.

"We are also in the process of working with other long-term consultants to help in the airline's long-term planning, applications and airplane leases. This is being headed by a British-based consultant," he added.

Chen said they look forward to working closely with the islands' business community and government. A job fair will be scheduled next month on island.

The new airline aims to employ about 60 individuals on the islands, who will begin training in January next year.

Initially, Air Saipan flights will be chartered and will operate out of Guangzhou and Shanghai and a possible Cairns flight in 2011. Lufthansa Consulting has recently signed memorandum with Air Saipan.

The CNMI government earlier said that China was not immediately informed by the U.S. State Department of the new parole authority that would still allow Chinese tourists to enter the CNMI without a U.S. visa by Nov. 28. This miscommunication caused the temporary suspension of charter flights from China to Saipan. The flights will resume on Friday, Dec. 18.

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Farmer says cop pointed gun at him

A farmer has filed a complaint against a police sergeant who allegedly pointed a gun at him during an argument in As Lito on Friday.

A source at the Department of Public Safety disclosed yesterday that DPS commissioner Santiago Tudela ordered the police sergeant to surrender his firearm while the investigation is ongoing.

As of yesterday, the source said, the police sergeant has not been arrested yet.

DPS has yet to release details of the incident.

The source said the farmer is a Chinese national who is married to the police sergeant's sister.

After the police officer pointed the gun at him, the farmer walked all the way from As Lito to DPS in Susupe to file the complaint.

The cause of the fight is not clear.

The case comes on the heels of other police officers figuring in questionable incidents.

On Nov. 20, police arrested police Sergeant Joseph Agulto for allegedly beating up his girlfriend at a nightclub in western Garapan.

On Nov. 16, the Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Detective Christopher Leon Guerrero after the FBI uncovered an alleged extortion racket perpetrated by Leon Guerrero who demanded and received money from unlicensed Chinese taxi drivers. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

CNMI Judiciary to host Law and the Freshman Legislator program

On Jan. 7, 2010, the CNMI Judiciary will conduct the Fourth Biennial Law and the Freshman Legislator program designed for legislators who have recently been elected for the first time. The program is intended to give future lawmakers insight as to how the judiciary interprets and applies the law.

During the one day event sitting justices and judges will speak on topics such as the CNMI judicial system, the U.S. Constitution, the Commonwealth's Constitution, and the Covenant. There will also be an overview of statutory interpretation, as well as a roundtable discussion of issues of special interest to the new legislators.

Presenters will include Supreme Court Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Justice John A Manglona, Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona, and Commonwealth Law Revision Commission executive director Heather L. Kennedy.

The first Law and the Freshman Legislator event was held in January 2004. Past participants strongly recommended that the judiciary hold the program after each election and prior to the new legislature's inauguration.

In expressing his hope that each freshman legislator would find time to attend, Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan offered congratulations for the new legislators' recent election to the Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. "In endeavoring to serve the people, you have made a commendable commitment. The Commonwealth needs your time and talent," said Demapan. "Just as the people of the Commonwealth extend their confidence in your leadership and vision, we, too, extend our confidence in your abilities."

There are 14 freshmen legislators in the new 17th Legislature. ***(PR)***

CAMPAIGN

From Page 1

the first one to file his campaign statement of account on Nov. 12 among eight filers as of Friday, Dec. 11.

Guerrero, in a phone interview yesterday, said he didn't spend anything on his campaign, except for the $100 fee for filing his candidacy with the Commonwealth Election Commission.

"I didn't spend for anything, no paid advertisement. I was the only Board of Education member candidate for Saipan and I thought it would be ridiculous to spend money which I can instead use to pay for my utility just like anybody else," he said.

Guerrero also did not hold any fundraising event nor solicited donations for his campaign.

The campaign statement of account must show details of any contribution worth at least $500 received during the election period.

All candidates and political parties are required by law to file their campaign statement of account within 50 days after the election, or by Dec. 28, 2009 for the 2009 general elections on Nov. 7, and Jan. 12, 2010 for the CNMI's first gubernatorial runoff election on Nov. 23.

"To avoid penalty fees for late filing, all candidates and political parties are urged to file their campaign statement of account on or before the deadline. In addition, OPA reminds all elected officials to file a statement of financial interest when they take their oath of office," Pai added.

There were 110 candidates who vied for over 40 positions in the Nov. 7 general elections.

The runoff election involved only Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos of the Covenant Party, and Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios of the Republican Party.

$100 penalty to imprisonment

A candidate or political party will be assessed a penalty of $100 for each calendar day the report is late.

A person who violates the requirements for filing shall, upon conviction, be fined up to $50,000 or imprisoned for up to one year, or both.

The campaign statement of account is required to include all campaign contributions and expenses, including proceeds and expenses from fundraising events, in-kind contributions, contributed property, and multi-candidate contributions and expenses.

All contributions are required to be reported on the candidate's and political party's campaign statement of account.

"If a candidate or a political party receives a contribution of less than $500 (in the aggregate) from a contributor or supporter, then the amount of that contribution is required to be reported regardless of the amount, even though the name of the contributor need not be disclosed," Pai said.

Anonymous contributions

The public auditor said anonymous contributions of any amount "are not allowed."

"A candidate who receives an anonymous contribution must immediately turn the contribution over to the CNMI Treasurer for deposit into Commonwealth General Fund," he said.

Upon written request from the candidate, the Commonwealth Election Commission may extend the deadline for filing by up to 15 days. However, the candidate must possess an approved extension by Dec. 28, 2009, to avoid being assessed a penalty.

Candidates who are granted a filing extension by the Election Commission must file their campaign finance report by the expiration date of the extension granted.

Copies of campaign statement of account form for candidates and political parties, as well as more information about the filing requirements, are available on the OPA website, www.opacnmi.com.

To assist candidates track and report details supporting the campaign statement of account, the Commonwealth Election Commission has developed 10 forms, including a summary of fundraising receipts and disbursements, a list of monetary fundraising contributions, and a list of multi-candidate contributions and expenses.

OPA also provides free notary service for filers.

FAKE

From Page 1

owner of SM Auto Shop, was arrested at Dandan Homestead Friday on charges of filing a false report.

During yesterday's hearing, Superior Court associate judge Kenneth Govendo imposed a $500 cash bail plus $9,500 unsecured bond for Munshi's temporary liberty.

Police Officer Flor T. Estabillo stated in his report that on Dec. 8 at 10:19pm the Department of Public Safety received a call about a car crash along Flame Tree Road in Dandan.

Responding police officer Nam Hoon Kwon saw a silver Toyota Corolla four-door sedan resting on the southwest bound lane. The car had moderate damage to the front bumper and the airbags were deployed.

Kwon also saw a green Chrysler van resting on the southwest lane and partially on the eastbound lane. The van, which had minor damage to the front bumper, was still engaged with the Toyota Corolla.

Naomi I. Taitano, who claimed to be the driver of the Toyota Corolla, sought medical attention and was taken to the Commonwealth Health Center.

Hilario P. Piol, who claimed to be the driver of the van, refused medical treatment.

Estabillo said he responded to the scene after learning from Kwon that the damage to the two vehicles did not corroborate with the statements of Taitano and Piol.

Estabillo said that, while he was interviewing Piol, officer Kwon later called to inform him that Taitano had admitted that the crash was staged and planned by Munshi.

Taitano is the wife of Munshi. She allegedly claimed she would get $200 from her husband and the Toyota Corolla after its repair.

Estabillo said that when he informed Piol about Taitano's admission, Piol recanted his statements, confessing that the crash was indeed planned by Munshi, who promised to pay him $200.

Estabillo said Piol also confessed he had done this kind of crashes before, all of which Munshi had planned.

Piol stated he also recruited some drivers for this kind of staged crashes in exchange for $100. He said he would receive $200 from the defendant while each of the recruited drivers would get $100.

Etabillo said Piol revealed that they were supposed to stage the fake crash in Dandan last Dec. 7 at the Susupe basketball court, but they canceled it because one of the vehicles had engine problems at the time.

Estabillo said Piol disclosed that at the crash scene, a Bangladeshi man drove the van while he was the passenger.

Munshi served as the driver of the Toyota Corolla. After making the cars collide three times, Munshi instructed Piol and Taitano to tell police that they were the drivers.

Munshi and the Bangladeshi man then walked toward the Japanese tankers in the area. Taitano called the police to report the crash.

The report did not mention whether the scheme was intended to collect on car insurance benefits.

Police are now investigating other possible fake crashes.

OVERSTAYERS

From Page 1

"I hope she's not going to accommodate those overstayers," Fitial told reporters on Capital Hill yesterday afternoon.

Fitial, who authorized the distribution of thousands of "umbrella permits" through the CNMI Department of Labor, also expressed concern about Federal Labor Ombudsman Pamela Brown's authority to conduct the accounting of nonresident workers.

"I'm concerned about the authority; if she has the authority to do what she's trying to do," Fitial added.

The governor also said that nonresident workers are already "in good hands with the umbrella [permits]."

The Federal Labor Ombudsman's Office started the accounting of nonresident workers in the CNMI at 4pm yesterday. Based on the agency's schedule, alien workers having last names starting with A and B were to report to its offices at the Marina Heights II Building yesterday.

Alien workers are told to bring a copy of their passport or other photo identification when they go to the federal agency's office for the accounting process, which will be held daily until Dec. 29, 2009.

In a notice, the ombudsman said the accounting process is based on Public Law 110-229 or the federalization law, which requires the U.S. Department of the Interior to report to the U.S. Congress the total number of aliens within the Commonwealth.

Dekada Movement counsel Stephen C. Woodruff earlier cautioned alien workers who do not have "umbrella permits" against participating in the "accounting" process.

"There is a very real risk that aliens lacking an umbrella permit who register with the Ombudsman's office could be setting themselves up as targets for deportation by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement," he said in a statement.

CHC autonomy bill

In other news, the governor said he's waiting for comments from different agencies, including the Office of the Attorney General, on a bill providing autonomy to and ensuring accountability by, the Commonwealth Health Center.

House Bill 16-9, which seeks to create a Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., is now on Fitial's desk for action.

On Dec. 3, the House of Representatives approved on a 14-0 vote the Senate amendments to the bill.

The CHC bill, authored by Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, is hailed as "landmark" legislation by lawmakers and officials, including Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez and Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan).

In other news, Fitial said everyone is invited to his inauguration set for Jan. 11, 2010.

Fitial is only the second governor in CNMI history to be re-elected.

When asked whether he would invite Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) or Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs Tony Babauta, Fitial said, "Everyone deserves to be invited."

OBAMA

From Page 1

bus spending plan worked out with the U.S. House of Representatives, which passed the measure on Thursday.

The measure, which would succeed a funding resolution that expires Friday, now goes to President Obama to be signed into law.

In a statement yesterday, Sablan said earmarked projects are just a tiny portion of the entire $447 billion bill, which also contains an average 2 percent wage increase for federal employees.

"This is another important result of having representation in Congress. For the first time, the Northern Marianas has someone who can ask for and receive targeted funding for projects that otherwise might not get the money they need," he said.

Singled out

The Senate passed H.R. 3288 by a vote of 57-35. Only three Republicans voted to approve the funding. In the House, no Republicans voted in favor.

Former Republican presidential candidate Sen. John McCain described as "awful" one of the seven CNMI projects requested for funding by Sablan—the Garapan public market. McCain urged the Senate to vote against the bill and its "wasteful spending."

"I demand the president of the United States keep his word, when he signed another pork-laden bill last March, to veto this bill," said McCain before Sunday's vote.

McCain lost to Obama in last year's presidential election.

But Sablan thinks his funding requests are anything but wasteful.

"My funding requests are focused on education and economic development. I don't think there is anything wrong with that. I also try to work for the people who don't have a lot of money, but who have a very legitimate need for help," Sablan added.

The seven projects Sablan won funding for include the Refaluwasch and Chamorro language programs for the Public School System, $250,000; the Northern Marianas Trade Institute for vocational and technical training, $200,000; the design and construction of the Garapan Public Market, $200,000; the Micronesian Legal Services's Rota and Tinian outreach, $180,000; Joeten-Kiyu Public Library's roof repairs, $200,000; the Division of Fish and Wildlife's educational programs on marine sanctuaries, $220,000; and the Public School System's purchase of library books and educational materials, $100,000.

CPA's operation 'unaffected' by federalization

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Since federalization took effect on Nov. 28, the Commonwealth Ports Authority has noted no impact on its operations despite the presence of federal authorities in both Saipan and Rota international airports.

CPA board chair Jose Lifoifoi told *Saipan Tribune* he optimistic the agency would remain independent in its operational authority at both airports.

"We're not seeing any major impact on our airport operations for now…so I don't think CPA will be affected in anyway by this federalization," Lifoifoi said during the launch of the CNMI commemorative quarters at American Memorial Park on Dec. 10.

The chairman said the agency will continue to monitor its operation to see the potential effects of federalization on the future operations of the ports authority.

CPA earlier expressed worries about the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's authority to classify airports as domestic or international, citing this authority may bar the Rota airport from accommodating international flights, which will hurt its tourism industry.

The CBP has established separate offices at both Tinian and Rota airports since the federal takeover of the local immigration system last month. Lifoifoi said that negotiations for the terms and conditions of CBP's occupancy of these spaces are being directly channeled to the Governor's Office.

CPA receives millions in federal grants from the Federal Aviation Administration. The federal agency approved approximately $13 million in grants from fiscal years 2008 up to 2009.

Four major projects are covered under these funds: generator upgrade and the runway rehabilitation for Saipan airport, the parallel taxi way in Tinian, and the runway shoulder in Rota.

On top of these approved funding, FAA also provided additional funds under the stimulus package of President Obama, amounting to $5 million, to be used to augment funds for the runway rehabilitation of Saipan's airport.

Lifoifoi said he is confident that these funds will continue to pour into CNMI airports.

The chairman is convinced that the presence of federal authorities through federalization will also strengthen the ties between CPA and the FAA.

Judge dismisses former NMC staff's lawsuit against Fund

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court dismissed yesterday the lawsuit filed by a former employee of the Northern Marianas College against the CNMI government and the NMI Retirement Fund over the denial of her retirement benefits.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson dismissed Malinda S. Matson's lawsuit after the parties in the case agreed to the dismissal.

Munson ordered the closure of the file and ordered each party to bear their own costs, attorney fees, and expenses.

On Oct 8, 2009, Munson instructed the parties in the lawsuit to come to a settlement without the court's assistance.

Matson, through counsel Richard W. Pierce, signed the agreement for the dismissal of the case with the lawyers for the Retirement Fund, the board of trustees, and Fund administrator Mark A. Aguon.

The terms of the settlement were not stated in court papers.

Matson, who now lives in Virginia, had asked the court to stop the Fund trustees and Aguon from refusing to process her application for retirement benefits.

She wanted the court to issue an order declaring that the denial of her retirement benefits violates the guarantees of equal protection and due process and the right to be free from arbitrary and capricious government action, and unreasonable seizure, all of which are protected by the U.S. Constitution.

Matson also asked the court to order the Fund to pay her damages, court costs, attorney's fees, expert fees, and interest.

Pierce said that Matson served the CNMI government as an employee with over 25 years of Class II vested membership service in the government retirement system.

Pierce said Matson worked for the government until Jan. 2, 2009, and then retired from service.

Subsequent to her last day of service, Matson applied for pension due her under the government's retirement system.

The Fund, the lawyer said, certified that Matson had met the required service to be eligible for retirement benefits.

In April 2009, Pierce said, the Fund declined to process Matson's application for retirement benefits because the Department of Finance had not remitted to the Fund approximately $144,460 in employer's contribution to the Fund.

Pierce said that by law, any class II member of the government's retirement system who has 25 years of membership service may retire and be provided retirement benefits upon written application to the Fund's board of trustees. The law, Pierce stressed, does not provide the board with any discretion in the matter.

By virtue of Matson's payment of contributions to the retirement system, he said, she received a vested interest in a contribution reserve account to the Fund.

As of Sept. 30, 2008, the vested account for Matson had a credit of $113,366, the lawyer said.

COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
P.O. Box 502149, Saipan MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245/6293/7145/7146 • Fax: (670) 234-7144 or 235-7147
Email: administration@cda.gov.mp • Website: www.cda.gov.mp

PUBLIC NOTICE
December 15, 2009

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION DIVISION (DCD) OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY THRU ITS CHAIRWOMAN, HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE DCD BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD A REGULAR MEETING THURSDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2009 AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, WAKIN'S BUILDING, CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
1. Roll Call

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

III. ADOPTION OF MINUTES
1. September 10, 2009

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

V. REPORTS
1. Financial Report – DCD
2. Loan Reports
   a. Loan Applications
   b. Approved Loans & Bank Guarantees
   c. Loan Status/Receivables Report
   d. DCD Performing Loan Summary/Delinquency & Litigation

VI. OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS
1. Health Professional Corporation (HPC)

VIII. OTHER MATTERS

IX. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. ***(Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session)***

/s/MARCIE M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman, DCD Board of Directors

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Grand Draw: December 18, 2009
Entry forms can be dropped at: IT&E Customer Service (Chalan Laulau)
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DPH to ask for extension of emergency declaration

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Department of Public Health will ask the governor for an extension on the emergency declaration for the hospital until it gets the needed staffing for all its services, according to Deputy Secretary Pete Untalan Saturday.

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial had declared a health emergency for the CNMI on Oct. 20 due to the hospital's lack of manpower to provide for the island's health care needs.

Untalan admitted Saturday that, since the emergency declaration, they have yet to hire all the needed physicians and key personnel in important areas.

As of last week, seven to eight doctors were still needed, on top of non-physician positions such as nursing director, renal social workers, medical records administrator, and other health care practitioners and providers.

"We're going to ask the governor to extend the emergency declaration for probably a month or two until we fill the needed critical posts at the hospital. It is through the declaration that we can expedite the hiring and bringing of these professionals into our hospital," he told *Saipan Tribune.*

Recruitment

Untalan described all recruitment efforts as "ongoing" in both U.S. and Manila hospitals.

He said five potential doctors may soon join the hospital workforce if negotiations with Manila hospitals prosper.

"The extension will give us breathing room to recruit the people that we need," he said, adding that the emergency declaration is a way to resolve the decade-old problem of manpower shortage at the lone hospital on island.

As of November, the hospital has 31 physicians and 235 nurses attending to all the needs of patients. These include part-time doctors from private health clinics. The CHC needs 43 doctors to be fully staffed.

Of the 235 nurses, 12 were hired in the last six months. About 75 percent of these nurses are working without the requisite U.S. visa.

Medicaid

Untalan also clarified that people may now go to private doctors to avail of their services using Medicaid.

"Our mission now is to collaborate and utilize the private sector so we can grow a medical economy. And the best thing we can attribute to the administration is the opening up of Medicaid because a lot of people are now seeking health care services with private physicians and they don't have to go to the hospital [which has only a few doctors onboard]," he said.

"I consider this as one of the greatest achievements ever done for the hospital and helping the health care," he said.

The governor, in his declaration, ordered DPH to immediately adopt new recruitment strategies to restore an adequate level of medical services at the hospital. He also directed the Medical Profession Licensing Board, now known as the Health Care Professions Licensing Board, to review and revise regulations so that expanded medical services may be provided to the client population of the Commonwealth.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Workshop participants, from left, Gina Rankin, Edward Maratita, Mary Rose Lucero, Sarah Klockowski, Danielle LaBossiere, Diana Boland, Aaron Mar, Janet H. King and Richard Moreno.

Humanities Council hosts mock trial workshop

Seven teachers from around the Commonwealth participated in a two-hour junior high mock trial workshop held Saturday at the U.S. District Court in Garapan.

The workshop, sponsored by the NMI Council for the Humanities, was organized in conjunction with its 2010 Junior High Mock Trial Program, which is open to all 7th and 8th grade students on Saipan, Tinian and Rota.

The goals of the mock trial program are to help students develop useful knowledge about the law and sharpen critical thinking and oral advocacy skills in an enjoyable, non-competitive format. It also prepares them for the competitive mock trial program at the high school level.

Humanities Council board members attorney Janet H. King and Louisiana attorney Richard Moreno facilitated the workshop during which participants were introduced to the objectives of the program, the physical layout of the courtroom, and proper decorum and dress.

King and Moreno also provided advice on opening and closing remarks, direct and cross examinations, and introducing evidence.

This year's Junior High Mock Trial final event will be held in March. Participants will argue the same case as the high school program using a set of modified rules.

The Council invites interested teachers to register for this program. Registration forms and case materials may be obtained from Council staff at Springs Plaza in Gualo Rai or downloaded from the Council's website www.nmihumanities.org. ***(PR)***

CCA honors 11 groups, individuals for supporting fight against cancer

The Commonwealth Cancer Association recently presented awards of appreciation to individuals and groups who have supported the fight against cancer in the CNMI.

Association president Alex Sablan and MMAC 2010 chair Janine Nogis acknowledged 11 organizations and individuals who have consistently shown their support in this effort.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Ten-year sponsors pose for a group photo. Many thanks to Joeten Charitable Foundation, DFS Galleria, Office of the Mayor of Saipan. Not in photo: IT&E, Shell Marianas and YAS, Inc.

Corporate supporters include Joeten Charitable Foundation, DFS Galleria, IT&E, Office of the Mayor of Saipan, Shell Marianas, and Younis Arts Studio Inc.

Among the teams that have joined the Marianas March Against Cancer and then Relay for Life include Team Ahu, Team Bodig, Team IT&E, and Team PIC.

During the presentation of awards, CCA also distributed its 2007-2008 Annual Report to all present. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Outstanding teams for the past 10 years include Team Ahu, Team Bodig, Team PIC. Not in photo Team IT&E.

CNMI Judiciary to host Law and the Freshman Legislator program

On Jan. 7, 2010, the CNMI Judiciary will conduct the Fourth Biennial Law and the Freshman Legislator program designed for legislators who have recently been elected for the first time. The program is intended to give future lawmakers insight as to how the judiciary interprets and applies the law.

During the one day event sitting justices and judges will speak on topics such as the CNMI judicial system, the U.S. Constitution, the Commonwealth's Constitution, and the Covenant. There will also be an overview of statutory interpretation, as well as a roundtable discussion of issues of special interest to the new legislators.

Presenters will include Supreme Court Justice Alexandro C. Castro, Justice John A Manglona, Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona, and Commonwealth Law Revision Commission executive director Heather L. Kennedy.

The first Law and the Freshman Legislator event was held in January 2004. Past participants strongly recommended that the judiciary hold the program after each election and prior to the new legislature's inauguration.

In expressing his hope that each freshman legislator would find time to attend, Chief Justice Miguel S. Demapan offered congratulations for the new legislators' recent election to the Seventeenth Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. "In endeavoring to serve the people, you have made a commendable commitment. The Commonwealth needs your time and talent," said Demapan. "Just as the people of the Commonwealth extend their confidence in your leadership and vision, we, too, extend our confidence in your abilities."

There are 14 freshmen legislators in the new 17th Legislature. ***(PR)***

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950
HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

PROMOTIONAL & OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

It is the policy of the Board of Education, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, that the Public School System's Human Resources shall be applied and administered according to the principles of equal employment opportunity as defined by the Northern Marianas Commonwealth Public Law 6 - 10, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, marital status, handicap or place of origin. Applicants for this position must be a U.S. Citizen or be eligible and authorized to work in the U.S., including the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Announcement No: **PSS-2009-092**
Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **CIP COORDINATOR (Chief Engineer)**
Pay Level/Step: **UNGRADED** Per Annum Salary: **$50,000.00**
Opening Date: November 30, 2009 Closing Date: December 15, 2009
Location: **PSS – ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays
Minimum Requirements:
Graduation from a US accredited college or university with a BA degree in Architecture, Civil Engineering, or related field, plus at least five (5) years experience in construction management, architecture, or related field; CNMI License preferred.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd FLOOR RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

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Announcement No: **PSS-2009-090**
Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **COMPTROLLER (Internal Auditor)**
Pay Level/Step: **UNGRADED** Per Annum Salary: **$40,000.00**
Opening Date: **November 30, 2009** Closing Date: **December 15, 2009**
Location: **PSS – FISCAL & BUDGET OFFICE**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays
Minimum Requirements:
Bachelor's degree in Accounting from an accredited college or university with Certified Public Accountant (CPA) preferred, plus three (3) years work experience in government accounting or internal auditing or closely related experience with two (2) years of work experience using Wang computer and Dialog software.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd FLOOR RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

PROMOTIONAL & OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

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Announcement No: **PSS-2009-089** Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **FINANCIAL / BUDGET ANALYST I-IV**
Pay Level/Step: **25, 26, 29 & 32 / 01-12** Per Annum Salary: **$17,700.92-$42,558.00**
Opening Date: **November 30, 2009** Closing Date: **December 15, 2009**
Location: **PSS – FISCAL & BUDGET OFFICE**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays
Minimum Requirements:
Financial / Budget Analyst I – Any combination equivalent to graduation from college or university with a BA degree and at least one (1) year related work experience or High School graduate with at least five (5) years related work experience.
Financial / Budget Analyst II – Any combination equivalent to graduation from college or university with a BA degree and at least two (2) years related work experience or High School graduate with at least six (6) years related work experience.
Financial / Budget Analyst III – Any combination equivalent to graduation from college or university with a BA degree and at least three (3) years related work experience or High School graduate with at least seven (7) years related work experience.
Financial / Budget Analyst IV – Any combination equivalent to graduation from college or university with a BA degree and at least five (5) years related work experience or High School graduate with at least nine (9) years related work experience.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd FLOOR RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITY (FOR PSS EMPLOYEES ONLY) EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT

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Announcement No: **PSS-2009-086** Application & Employment Type: **Non-Certified**
Position Title: **SCHOOL VICE PRINCIPAL I-II**
Pay Level/Step: **UNGRADED** Per Annum Salary: **$40,000.00-$50,000.00**
Opening Date: **December 4, 2009** Closing Date: **December 21, 2009**
Location: **PSS – KagES / GES / DDES / MHS / RHS / KHS**
Benefits: Salary Commensurate with qualifications and experience, plus excellent benefits (including Life Insurance, Retirement Benefits, and Paid Leave/Holidays
Minimum Requirements:

Vice Principal I
(a) Graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree in education, related field or equivalent.
(b) At least three (3) years appropriate teaching experience.
• Must take and pass PRAXIS I & the appropriate PRAXIS II exam starting July 31, 2007.

Vice Principal II
(a) Master's degree in education and administration or a related field.
(b) At least three (3) years appropriate teaching experience; and
(c) Must possess a valid administrator certification.
• Must take and pass PRAXIS I & the appropriate PRAXIS II exam starting July 31, 2007.

INTERESTED APPLICANTS MAY OBTAIN A DETAILED JOB DESCRIPTION WITH QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AND APPLICATION FORMS AT THE PSS HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE AT THE 3rd FLOOR RETIREMENT BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL. REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MUST BE ATTACHED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORMS: (1) COPY OF DIPLOMA/DEGREE, (2) TRANSCRIPTS, (3) POLICE CLEARANCE (FROM PLACE OF RESIDENCE FOR PAST SIX MONTHS), (4) VERIFICATION OF EMPLOYMENT LETTER, (5) RESUME, AND (6) TEACHING CERTIFICATE (IF APPLICABLE).COMPLETED APPLICATIONS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS MAY BE SUBMITTED TO THE HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE OR MAILED TO: CNMI PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, ATTN: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE, RETIREMENT BUILDING; THIRD FLOOR, P.O. BOX 501370 CK, SAIPAN, MP 96950, and TEL. #. (670) 237-3051, FAX # (670) 664-3707. ALSO VISIT http://www.pss.cnmi.mp/humanresources ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB.

Hawaii abuzz about Obamas' holiday return

BY HERBERT A. SAMPLE
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

KAILUA, Hawaii (AP)—Many in this upscale, oceanside suburb of Honolulu are expecting it to again serve as the holiday getaway for scores of reporters, photographers, federal agents— and one president.

The White House hasn't formally announced that President Barack Obama and his family will be celebrating Christmas in Hawaii—or anywhere else—in part because the health care reform debate in Congress may delay his departure. Gov. Linda Lingle's office and Honolulu police also are remaining silent.

But there are many behind-the-scenes indications that plans are being made, and Kailua is abuzz with anticipation, hoping for an economic boost from another visit by the Hawaii-born president.

"The word is out," said John Stallings, a real estate agent who runs the Web site OurKailuaTown.com. "I'd say it's more than the talk around town that they are returning."

AP

In this Aug. 12, 2008 file photo, then Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill. walks the beach with his daughters Malia, 10, left, and Sasha, 7, during his vacation in Kailua, Hawaii.

Stallings said he knows for a fact that preparations are being made to house Secret Service agents during the holidays in rental homes near where Obama stayed a year ago. There have also been several news reports indicating a possible presidential vacation starting Dec. 23.

A visit would be Obama's first as president to Hawaii, where he was born and spent many of his childhood years. It's also the first time he's coming home with no relatives living here. Obama's grandmother passed away last year just days before he was elected and his sister has since moved to Washington.

Many expect that Obama, his wife, Michelle, and their two daughters will vacation in the same multimillion-dollar beach home where they stayed a year ago. It's located on the Windward side of Oahu at the base of the towering, green Koolau mountains, about a half-hour drive from downtown Honolulu. The five-bedroom home is in a long cul-de-sac and features Kawainui Stream on the other side of the road and the white sands of Kailua Beach out back. It's a pricey neighborhood—one nearby home is on the market for nearly $13 million.

Neighbors said they aren't concerned that Obama's visit will cause havoc since he and his entourage didn't seem to cause much disruption last year.

"It wasn't problematic," Lisa Kiakona said. "It was kind of neat to be in the mix."

Kern Rogerson was slightly bummed when told Obama is expected to show up soon. But that's only because he regularly kayaks along the Kawainui Stream canal and last year the Secret Service prevented him from launching down the street from where Obama was encamped, he said.

"It's more important to keep him safe," said Rogerson, 59, who lives in neighboring Kaneohe. "I figure it's a small sacrifice."

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Application deadline today for scholarship

The CNMI Scholarship Office is now accepting applications for financial assistance for this Winter/Spring 2009-2010 term. Application deadline is today, Dec. 15, 2009.

If you submitted an application for Fall 2009, your application is still valid for Winter/Spring 2009-2010. Supporting documents must be submitted at the same time and is due by March 1, 2010.

For new and returning applicants, supporting documents include: Acceptance letter; official transcript; copy of U.S passport and/or birth certificate; Winter/Spring 2010 class schedule; proof of CNMI residency for 2007-2008.

For all ongoing applicants, grade report, official transcript and class schedule must be submitted before March 1, 2010, in order to be considered for next term.

For (PL 14-37) Honors Scholarship recipients, submit the following supporting documents once they become available to you: Official transcript and class schedule for Winter/Spring 2010.

For more information or to pick up an application, visit the Scholarship Office on Capital Hill, Building 1311 or call (670) 664-4750/52. ***(PR)***

OES PTSA meeting today

The PTSA Officers of Oleai Elementary School Would like to inform the parents and guardians of Oleai Elementary School that there will be a PTSA meeting today, Dec. 15, 2009, at 6:15pm in the school cafeteria. Everyone is encouraged to attend. ***(PR)***

Humanities Council to host book discussion program

The NMI Council for the Humanities invites to public to attend a four-week book discussion program that will explore four classic American novels. The program, which runs from Jan. 18 to Feb. 12, 2010, will be facilitated by Dr. P.F. Kluge, writer-in residence at Kenyon College in Ohio.

Books to be discussed during the program include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Old Man and the Sea*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Things They Carried*. One novel will be considered each week during three 90-minute sessions.

Individuals interested in attending this book discussion program are invited to contact Council staff at 235-4785 to reserve a seat. The program is limited to 100 participants who will be registered on a first come, first served basis. The venue and specific dates and times for sessions will be announced shortly. ***(PR)***

John Gonzales Live schedule

Dec 16, PSS Public Education Series: *Student and Parental Involvement in Public Schools*. Guests include_Katrina S. Lizama, principal, San Antonio Elementary School; Glenn Muna, principal, Oleai Elementary School; assigned parents and students

Show replays on Dec. 20 and 21. Show will be from 7pm to 8pm on KSPN Channel 2. Call 287-4230, Text 285-META (6382), or Email: johngonzales@pticom.com for questions or comments. ***(PR)***

Veterans' briefing set

Tina San Augustine, the Department of Veterans Affairs public contact and outreach specialist for Guam and the CNMI, will be on Saipan on Dec. 14-18, 2009, for a veterans outreach on veterans' federal benefits.

David Sheridan, vocational rehabilitation counselor, and Gaylene Matsunaga, home loan technician, also from the VA, will also be on Saipan on Dec. 15 and 16, to discuss veterans' needs on the VA home loan and vocational rehab.

■ Rota: Dec. 17-18, 8am to 4pm, at the Rota Mayor's Office conference room

■ Saipan: Dec. 15-16, 8am to 4pm, at the Office of Military/Veterans Affairs Office on Capital Hill.

■ Tinian: Dec. 14, 9am to 4pm, at the Tinian Mayor's Office

For more information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***

SSHS sets report card issuance

Parents and legal guardians of Saipan Southern High School students are being informed that the Mid-Progress Report is scheduled to be picked up on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009, from 3pm to 6pm. Teachers will be available in their classrooms for parental visit. All students will be released at 1pm. ***(PR)***

US Navy to conduct exercises on FDM

The U.S. Navy will conduct missile and laser training exercises on the island of Farallon de Medinilla from 2pm to 6pm on Dec. 17. The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon de Medinilla Training Area on a 10 nautical mile radius on all quadrants. The general public are advised to stay clear from this area during the times and date indicated. ***(PR)***

Pesticide safety workshop on Rota

The Pesticide Safety and Education Program will conduct a workshop for farmers on Dec. 15-18, 2009, from 8am to 4pm at the Rota campus of the Northern Marianas College.

The pesticide workshop is primarily intended for commercial and private farmers and will focus on the principles of pest control, insect biology, environmental concerns, loading and handling, labeling, math calibration and DEQ regulations.

Participants must attend the complete training course and pass the Pesticide safety examination and have Pesticide Safety and Education Program license in order to purchase and use the restricted use pesticides.

For more information, contact NMC-CREES: Arnold Route at 234-5498 Ext: 1432, Sid Cabrera at 234- 5498 or DEQ's Reina Camacho at 664-8522. ***(PR)***

Red Cross Health & Safety Training

The American Red Cross announces the following health and safety training for the month December 2009:

■ Infant & Child CPR – Dec. 19, 2009, Saturday. 8am – 1pm

■ Adult CPR – Dec. 22, 2009, Tuesday, 6pm – 10pm

■ First Aid – Dec. 29, 2009, Tuesday, 6pm – 10pm

The training fee for Adult CPR and First Aid is $30 per person/per course and the training fee for the Infant & Child CPR is $35 per person. A participant's booklet is required. Participant's booklet is $5 each and is good for all three courses.

For more information, call the NMI Chapter Office at 234-3459. ***(PR)***

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 15 1998

Holiday trips surge

The Northern Marianas will see an increase in the number of visitor arrivals from Japan this holiday season as Japan Airlines began its promotional campaign to help save the sagging tourism industry. This early, all JAL regular flights from December 23 to January 10 are already fully booked as Japanese escape the harsh winter season and spend the holidays on the island. Likewise, its four remaining chartered flights from Nagoya to Saipan using a Boeing 767 aircraft are already assured of full capacity. Two earlier flights arrived on December 4 and 11. At the same time, JAL's in-flight video focusing on the CNMI as a golfing destination will be shown in April 1999 to some 100 million passengers in all its international and domestic flights.

Panel considers $80M nonrated bond

The government is considering issuing $75 million to $80 million worth of nonrated bonds to raise cash to match Capital Improvement Projects funds, Commonwealth Development Authority Chairman Juan S. Tenorio said yesterday. He said the Revitalization Task Force, of which CDA is a member, made the decision in a last-ditch effort to source out an estimated $85 million in federal grants that have not been tapped since 1995. "Right now, we have no choice. It's important to borrow money," Tenorio said.

Dec.15, 1999

Nielsen's resignation sought

Visibly irked over refusal to reimburse expenditures incurred from community contributions, Rep. Melvin O. Faisao yesterday called on Finance Secretary Lucy DLG Nielsen to step down if she doesn't see it fit to comply with provisions of the law. "If she wants it her own way, resign and run for [Legislature] so she can define the meaning of 'public purpose'," he said during a House session. Mr. Faisao's complaints stemmed from alleged refusal by the Department of Finance to pay about $290 in tent rentals charged by the representative to his legislative account. Ms. Nielsen could not be reached for comment on his allegations.

James Manglona: I did it to keep my job

Thirty-three-year-old James King Manglona, also known as Jose Hofschneider, merely wanted to keep his job so that he can feed his family. A high school dropout without any special skill, he was lucky to land a job in the Legislature earning $35,000 a year as aide of former Sen. Herman M. Manglona. Unfortunately, his desire to give his four children—three boys and a girl—a comfortable life and a better future now remains uncertain. U.S. District Court Judge Alex R. Munson sentenced him yesterday to six months in prison for attempting to corrupt or influence a grand juror into voting against the indictment of Mr. Manglona. According to U.S. Attorney Kevin Seely, James approached a grand juror last Aug. 25 and asked her to disclose information in connection with any investigation on Mr. Manglona, who was then facing bribery charges committed when he was mayor of Tinian.

Dec.15, 2000

Jury finds Repeki guilty of murder

Jurors decided in favor of the prosecution yesterday when they found Eugene Repeki, Jr. guilty of murder in the second degree in connection with the brutal killing of a 40-year-old security guard last May 4, 1999. Mr. Repeki, 21, is only one of three suspects facing trial for the manslaughter and aggravated assault of Filipino worker Cesario B. Valerio. His alleged co-conspirators, Anthony Magofna and Thomas Basa, stand to undergo the same trial next year. Defense counsel Danny Aguilar said his client was disappointed over the jury verdict and is contemplating on other legal options before his sentencing on Feb. 8, 2001.

OPA wants MHS principal probed

Public Auditor Leo L. LaMotte is asking the Public School System to immediately look into the possible involvement of Marianas High School Principal James Denight in the alleged irregularities on the purchase of supplies and services using a special trust fund. Mr. LaMotte also urged the PSS to seriously consider the enforcement of employment sanctions against the custodian of the MHS Food Court, a locally-established food service program, for violating the ethics provision of the System's procurement rules. In a report released yesterday, the Office of the Public Auditor said monies collected from the operation of the MHS Food Court in School Year 1998-1999 were used exclusively to benefit the public high school.

Tinian's maia hosts 4th Annual Christmas Giveaway

Tinian's Donation Center lady wants all on the island to know that, although she had to close down the main part of her Helping-Hands Books and Donation Center two months ago due to losing the donated space, she is still running her "Free Books for Everyone" program out of her own front room, seven days a week. Starting Wednesday, Dec. 16, until Christmas Day, Dec. 25, all are welcome to come by for a scaled-down version of her annual Christmas Giveaway.

This year—the fourth in a row—for the first time, it won't be only for the most needy families on Tinian, but there will be "a little something" for everyone, according to maia.

"I couldn't bear to let the holidays go by without doing something for all the folks who'd made the Donation Center such a success, and for all who can't afford much for Christmas this year, when things are so bleak for so many," she said.

"Some of the wonderful people around the world that I help with my writing mentor program, and who keep us supplied with books, sent all kinds of little gifty things again this year," maia explained, "and I can't let them just sit there. So, we'll have a mini-Christmas Giveaway this year, instead of the full-fledged kind. And at least it'll be something."

CONTACT INFO
Tel: 433-9993
E-mail: maia3maia@hotmail.com

Everyone is invited to come by her duplex behind the Tinian Mayor's Office any day from Wednesday until Christmas Day, 9am to 1pm, or 3pm to 6pm, and pick out "a little something" for themselves and family members.

Maia hopes that before next Christmas, someone will donate building space again, so she can re-open the much-needed Donation Center that for the past three years had provided those in need with clothing, shoes, and household items donated by the people of Tinian themselves.

"There are so many buildings and houses sitting empty these days," maia said, 'that I'm hoping some generous owner would rather see their unused space helping their needy neighbors. That would be the best Christmas gift of all—to be able to re-open the Center."

She asks that anyone who can help find a new home for it to call 433-9993, or e-mail maia3maia@hotmail.com. ***(PR)***

Tilapia: Fish of the future for Pacific aquaculture?

Representatives from the Pacific last week heard from international experts that fish farming of tilapia—the "aquatic chicken"—has reached incredible levels approaching 3 million tons and $5 billion in sales annually worldwide. The statement was made at a meeting in Noumea organized by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Aquaculture Program.

In the United States, tilapia is among the top five seafoods sold. Its firm, white, mildly flavored fillets have been successfully marketed for home cooking or fine restaurant dining as having "not unlike the culinary versatility of chicken," according to Professor Kevin Fitzsimmons, former president of the American Tilapia Association.

Although all tilapia species originate from Africa, most farmed tilapia are produced in China and other Asian countries along with Egypt and the Americas. Despite its increasing popularity, however, the price paid to farmers has stayed the same while production costs, such as for feed, have risen. This is a worrying trend, warned Professor Sena De Silva, director general of the Network of Aquaculture Centers in Asia-Pacific.

PAUL RYAN
Red tilapia harvested in Vanuatu.

GERALD BILLINGS
Nile tilapia harvested in Fiji.

In comparison, tilapia output from the Pacific region is negligible. In 2007, the region harvested only around 300 tons of farmed Nile tilapia (*Oreochromis niloticus*), mostly from Fiji.

There has since been rapid uptake of the opportunity. Paul Ryan farms red hybrid tilapia in Vanuatu and sells up to 2.5 tons a week. He is already planning to increase this amount.

The most dramatic trend is seen in Papua New Guinea with its large inland population. According to Peter Minimulu of the National Fisheries Authority, there are around 20,000 fish farmers now estimated to be producing 10,000 tons of fish annually. (Previously, there was a scarcity of data for PNG tilapia production.)

Unfortunately for aquaculture prospects, the main species of tilapia found in the Pacific region is the Mozambique tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*).

The stock originating from the small handful of adult fish introduced 60 years ago "has lost most of its exploitable levels of genetic variation and so is unlikely to respond positively to any stock improvement program," according to Professor Mather, a geneticist based at Queensland University of Technology.

Moreover, Mozambique tilapia is now widespread and associated with declines in native species, said Aaron Jenkins from Wetlands International.

An SPC Aquaculture Expert Consultation, *Future directions for tilapia in the Pacific*, was held at SPC headquarters in Noumea intil Friday last week. Over the final two days, participants heard about developments emerging from Africa and Central America. The objective is to seek regional direction to support sustainable and profitable farming of tilapia in Pacific Island countries and territories. ***(SPC)***

PEPSI WINNER

Congratulations to Mary Ann Borja-Arriola, left, who won $300 last week in the "Pepsi Get Money" promo drawing held at the Joeten Hafa Adai store. At right is Donna Del Rosario, marketing and promotion specialist for Pacific Trading Co.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

Grace Christian Academy students pose for a souvenir picture after the successful staging of their annual Christmas production on Friday, Dec. 11, at the Grace Christian Academy auditorium. This year, the students performed A Christmas Carol, Revisited, a story about Tiny Tim who is all grown up and there are three ghosts who visits him, The Ghost of Christmas past, present, and future.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Belated happy birthday to Abram Jacob Repeki, who celebrated his 13th birthday on Sunday, Dec. 13. Best wishes and may you have many more birthdays to come! We love you! From your loving family and most especially your Daddy.

Guam's reef protection programs gets $1.8M grant

GUAM—Guam's Coastal Zone Management and Coral Reef Conservation programs have been awarded $1,807,888 in federal grants from the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

The acting director of the OCRM, Donna Wieting, notified Gov. Felix P. Camacho of the awards in a letter received Wednesday.

"Our reefs are our first indicator of rising tides and ocean temperatures and their associated threats to our island and people. This grant funding will help ensure that our reefs are healthy and resilient and is very meaningful to the future for all of our residents," said Camacho.

The grant funding, administered under the authority of the nation's Coastal Zone Management Act and Costal Reef Conservation Act, will be distributed as follows:

$988,200 to Guam Bureau of Planning;

$49,860 to the University of Guam;

$642,500 to the Guam Bureau of Statistics and Plans, Coastal Management;

$67,700 to the Western Pacific Region Fisheries Management Council; and

$59,628 to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

In her letter, Wieting said, "These awards are the result of a strong federal-territory partnership between Office of OCRM and your programs. …Through strong partnerships and by leveraging federal resources with state match resources, we accomplish so much for the coasts."

Through the partnership, Guam's programs receive assistance in devising annual work plans and providing training and up-to-date technical information on critical coastal issues, such as climate change and sea level rise. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 299

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

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EDITORIAL

Obama's global appeal

We've said before, and still believe, that awarding President Obama the Nobel Peace Prize after so short a time in office and so few concrete accomplishments was a mistake that diminished the credibility of the honor. But the acceptance speech he delivered Thursday in Oslo almost made it all worthwhile.

By now, we've come to expect intellectually stimulating and emotionally moving speeches from Obama—it probably wasn't his experience or administrative skills that got him elected. But this address was a blockbuster even by Obama's lofty standards, as much a philosophical treatise on war, peace and human aspirations as a call to action for other world leaders. It should serve as a blueprint to guide international decisions on alleviating conflict, poverty and tyranny.

Moral clarity is often hard to come by in the post-Cold War world. The United States' traditional position as a model of democratic values was badly undermined by President George W. Bush, and unfortunately Obama is continuing some of the same misguided policies on detention and trial of terrorism suspects that turned our last president into a global pariah. Yet even if Obama sometimes has trouble living up to his own values, nobody expresses them better.

The ideas he outlined Thursday for achieving world peace aren't new; they were also articulated by President Kennedy, who called not for a revolutionary change in human nature but "a gradual evolution in human institutions." Toward that end, Obama laid out three key steps: a stronger commitment to meaningful international sanctions against regimes that threaten the peace, unswerving support for human rights and freedom worldwide, and pursuit of economic development in poor countries. We've heard such sentiments many times before, but Obama's special gift is to make them seem achievable by appealing to our higher nature.

"The nonviolence practiced by men like Gandhi and (Martin Luther) King may not have been practical or possible in every circumstance," Obama said, "but the love that they preached—their fundamental faith in human progress—that must always be the North Star that guides us on our journey. For if we lose that faith—if we dismiss it as silly or naive; if we divorce it from the decisions that we make on issues of war and peace—then we lose what's best about humanity. We lose our sense of possibility. We lose our moral compass."

Obama has far more faith than Bush did in the power of diplomacy and the ability of global institutions to provide peace and stability, but it's a faith backed up with firepower. That's a strong combination.

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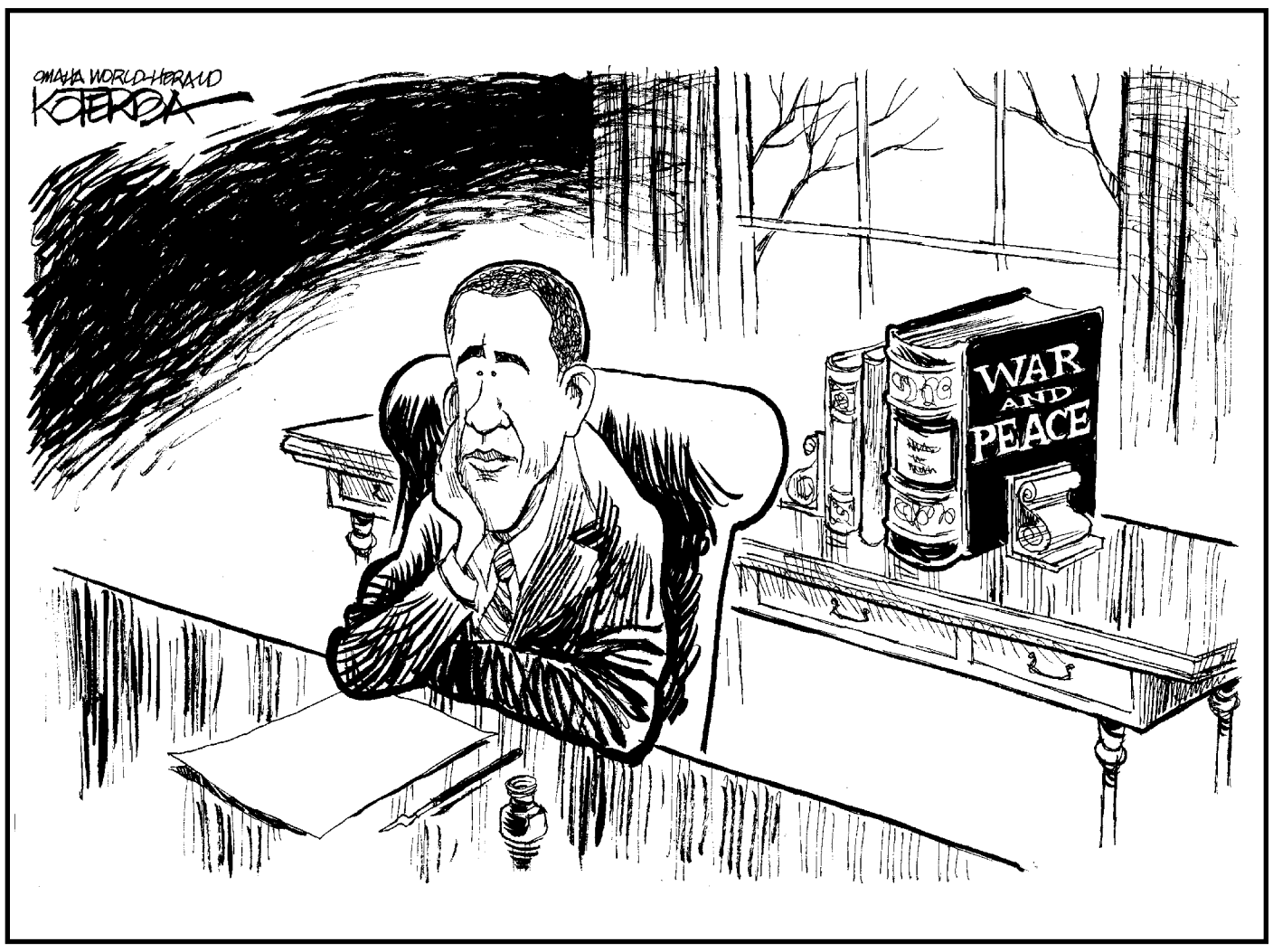

Travel, re-entry and the parole system

IMMIGRATION FORUM

By MAYA KARA and BRUCE MAILMAN
Special to the *Saipan Tribune*

Maya Kara is a native of Hungary and comes to the practice of law by way of her interest in Asian history. Bruce Mailman is a native of Bakersfield, California and was a private investigator in California prior to becoming a lawyer. Both have lived and practiced law in the CNMI for over 20 years, Maya in government service and Bruce in private practice. They are married and are partners in the law firm of Mailman & Kara, LLC in Garapan, Saipan.

Post-Nov. 28 restriction on travel for alien residents of the CNMI, who are lacking an appropriate U.S. visa, has been of great concern to business people and workers alike. Foreign investors and businessmen are accustomed to travel frequently and freely between the CNMI, their home country, and other foreign countries. Foreign workers are accustomed to return to their home countries for vacations, family visits or emergencies, and medical treatment. This freedom of travel has come to a sudden stop with the federalization of immigration. Prior to Nov. 28, we were repeatedly told that once an alien left the CNMI, he or she could not return without a U.S. visa. Valid CNMI entry permits, including umbrella permits, confer status only; they do not operate as visas to re-enter the CNMI.

It now turns out that there is an alternative after all. The Department of Homeland Security has reconsidered the harsh effect of the visa requirements on alien residents of the CNMI, and has implemented a parole procedure to accommodate most travel on a case by case basis.

What is parole?

Parole is a French word meaning "spoken word." In late medieval times in England, the term became associated with the practice of releasing prisoners giving their "parole"—their word of honor—to abide by the restrictions imposed on their release. In the modern criminal justice system, parole is the supervised release of a prisoner before the completion of his sentence in prison. In U.S. immigration law, parole means the discretionary authority of USCIS to allow aliens to temporarily enter the United Sates on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian or significant public policy reasons. As applied to the CNMI, the term is used in several different contexts for different purposes. We will briefly explain each use of parole as applied to the CNMI.

Advance Parole for Foreign Travel

"Advance parole" is permission for an alien to re-enter the CNMI, in lieu of a visa, after a period of foreign travel. This type of travel document will be especially useful for foreign investors and foreign business people residing in the CNMI who have a need to travel regularly. It will also be useful for contract workers who need to visit their home country for various reasons. We understand that this type of parole will be granted either for multiple entry or for single entry, depending on the circumstances and needs of the traveler.

To obtain an advance parole document, you must make a written request to USCIS, prior to your departure, and include the following: (1) a completed Form I-131 ("Application for Travel Document"); (2) a $305 check made out to U.S. Department of Homeland Security; (3) three passport photos; (4) copy of the photo page of your passport; (5) copy of your current valid CNMI entry permit and umbrella permit (if you have one); (6) copy of your roundtrip ticket, itinerary or e-ticket; (7) medical letter from your doctor or medical referral if the reason for travel is medical; (8) a cover letter briefly explaining your circumstances and need for travel.

If your travel is an emergency and it is three days or less before your departure; you need to take the documents listed above to the USCIS office at TSL Plaza, Beach Road, Garapan. If your departure is more than three days away, you will need to send your packet of documents to the USCIS Field Office in Guam at the following address: USCIS, Sirena Plaza, Suite 100, 108 Herman Cortez Avenue, Hagatña, Guam 96910. Remember that the U.S. Postal Service does not necessarily provide the fastest service to Guam; you might want to consider other delivery options. After you send your packet of documents off to Guam, it is a good idea to send an e-mail to USCIS, Saipan with your name, date of birth, nationality, CNMI status, and the date you mailed your packet to Guam. The email address is: uscis.saipan@dhs.gov. If you have no access to e-mail, you can drop off a copy of your request letter to the Saipan USCIS office so that they can help you track it.

We are told that the processing time for non-emergency advance parole is 10 business days. However it is our experience that in dealing with any bureaucracy, it is a good idea to allow extra time. So planning ahead is absolutely crucial if you wish to take advantage of the advance parole process. While it is possible to apply for advance parole before your departure and have someone mail or courier the advance parole document to you while you are abroad, this should be done in an emergency only. If you do not have your advance parole document in hand when you depart, you are taking the chance that if your request is denied, you will not be able to re-enter the CNMI. If you can, it is better to apply sufficiently ahead of your travel date, so that you can leave with the advance parole document in hand and be assured of re-entry upon your return.

See TRAVEL on next page

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Intolerable 'security'

By JO-ANN ARMAO
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

I just got back from a trip during which federal security officials at the Orlando, Fla., airport confiscated peanut butter snacks from the family ahead of me. Two weeks ago, after a flight from Albany, N.Y., I was distraught to open a suitcase that I had checked only to discover that the Christmas presents my mother had carefully wrapped had been torn open in a search by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) workers.

Normally, I would not think to complain about these events. I understand that a new world exists after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and that when it comes to ensuring public safety, what's a little inconvenience? So what if that hungry family has to buy more snacks after clearing security? So what if I have to spend an hour rewrapping gifts?

My equanimity, though, evaporated upon reading Wednesday about how the TSA posted online a 93-page manual detailing some of its most closely guarded security secrets. The incident was said to be an accident, part of a solicitation for a contract, but that makes it no less infuriating. Here I—and millions of other air travelers—are expected to go through hoops (shedding coats, jackets, shoes; surrendering babies for physical searches; allowing strangers to paw through our belongings), even as the officials entrusted with our safety do something that renders all those steps meaningless.

And therein likes the biggest danger: All along we have been told that there is a reason for all these silly things we are asked to do. "Trust us" has been the implicit command of the TSA. Not likely.

Armao is a member of The Washington Post*'s editorial page staff.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A violation of rights

Dear Attorney General Edward Buckingham: This is to register a complaint with your office concerning the lack of assistance provided to me as a domestic violence victim by the Office of the Victims Rights Advocate in connection with my complaint of the shooting incident of July 2, 2009, the abuse of authority by the Tinian Department of Public Safety in entering my property without my consent, allowing the defendant to have indirect contact with me and trespass my property, and the abuse of authority by the Commissioner of the Department of Corrections, Ms. Dolores San Nicolas Aldan, and several officers within the Tinian DPS for their involvement in the incident of Nov. 11, 2009.

First, I would like to share some background information on this matter so you can understand my frustration. This issue springs from a July 2, 2009, incident when, after an argument, my domestic partner, Vicente Aldan, pointed a gun at me and pulled the trigger several times. This was a very frightening experience to have someone point a gun at me, menacingly pull of the trigger and not knowing whether I was going to be killed with each pull of the trigger. Thankfully I escaped, barefoot and all but with my life intact.

Here is my first complaint: Since I filed the complaint until the case was disposed of by means of a guilty plea by the defendant, I was never contacted by the Victims Rights Office or any advocate in that office. No one contacted me to inform me of my rights under the Victims Rights Act. It was only when someone told me of this Act that I found out that the law requires the office to extend such assistance to me and guarantees many rights to victims like myself. I was never informed of my rights under the Act, I was never extended any assistance, including assistance with creditors, was never notified of any court proceedings, was not told of nor afforded my right to be present at all court proceedings, never informed of my rights to confer with the prosecutor, and did not receive any information regarding the conviction, sentencing, imprisonment, and release of my abuser.

I was never once informed of these rights contained in 6 CMC 9109, et seq. In fact, the only information I got about the status of my case or the whereabouts of my abuser was from the newspapers. I learned that he pleaded guilty, again only by happenstance due to something the Tinian DPS did to me, as I discuss below. Why was I not involved in the plea-bargaining? How were my rights as a victim protected if no one bothered to even tell me that the case was moving to a plea agreement? It seems that what happened to me was tossed aside and dealt with as unimportant—that my fleeing for my life after the defendant tried to kill me was ignored and belittled.

My second complaint: The Tinian DPS allowed the defendant to trespass on my property without my consent and tricked my daughter into believing that they had authority to enter my property. (I filed a complaint regarding this matter with the Tinian DPS, Case No. 09-000448.) On Nov. 11, 2009, between 10:30am and 10:45am, the Tinian DPS (officers Wally Villagomez and Eloy Fitial) came to my house (the scene of the July 2, 2009, shooting incident). At that time, I was not at my house but my daughter Vionna Aldan was outside the house. The officers got out of the car and held a piece of paper to Vionna, telling her that they have court papers and that they are there so that the defendant could show the officers where the gun was hidden. My daughter, noticing that the paper was official looking, just believed the officers that it was a search warrant or something like that. Besides, they told her it was papers giving them the right to be there. Pretty soon, the defendant got out of a rental car that came with the officers in the DPS vehicle and walked over to the side of the house. The Department of Corrections Commissioner, Dolores San Nicolas Aldan, also came out of the rental car and accompanied the defendant, Vicente Aldan. What is noteworthy here is that the Commissioner is also recently married to Vicente Aldan, the defendant.

My third complaint: The Tinian DPS and Corrections abused their authority. The Tinian DPS, namely the officers in this incident, lied to Vionna that they had authority to be on my property. The paper they used to pretend they had authority was the judgment and commitment order issued by the court. In fact, I was never served a copy of the order and it was only after I had gone to the Tinian DPS to file a complaint about this trespass incident that I was given a copy of the order. The order specifically prohibits the defendant from having any direct or indirect contact with me, and to surrender the gun he used in the incident. Nowhere on the order does it give the Tinian DPS any authority to be on my property without a search warrant. In addition, why was the Commissioner involved in this case if she is the defendant's spouse? Doesn't that present a conflict of interest on her part to be involved in protecting her interests, i.e. the interest of her spouse? She should not be involved in this case in any form. What is also interesting is that the case went swiftly from incident to adjudication, indicating that there's a strong likelihood that she exerted some influence due to her official capacity to get the defendant out of jail (so they can marry), etc? Did she also have some involvement in making sure that I did not know about the case, not made aware of the proceedings so that I can be heard, because it may delay the adjudication of the case? To what extent was she involved in getting the Tinian DPS to do her bidding, whatever that may be in reference to this case?

Finally, I am concerned that there may be retaliation actions that are being planned against me as a result of my complaining to you. I have had people tell me to be careful because they have heard from some police officers that I will targeted (scrutinized for traffic citations, etc.) if I continue to complain. I also was informed that Officer Melvin Monkeya believes that a police officer can enter anyone's property without any legal documents. I believe he needs to be reminded that such entry without any warrant is only allowable in exigent circumstances and that his position does not give him blanket authority to go anywhere.

I want this entire incident to be thoroughly investigated as to why I was never consulted on any issue relating to my domestic violence case, why were the officers and Commissioner allowed to be involved in enabling the defendant to violate the court order of no contact with me, and what solutions will be arrived at to ensure that my rights are protected.

Ellis Barcinas
San Jose, Tinian

Thanks for your service

As a long time friend of Sam McPhetres dating back to the days of the Trust Territory and also one who shares his interested in history, I have always admired his dedication to service, concern for accuracy, and respect for diverse opinions.

I was shocked to learn that Sam will no longer be associated with the College. If his departure was of his choice, then so be it. He deserves a long overdue reprieve from the classroom.

If, however, his contract was not renewed as a result of what some believe to be a result of a recent survey conducted by the students under his direction, then there is a very serious breach of academic freedom, the diminishment of which will result in the students being more the loser than Sam.

One would hope that the decision to leave the college was his and he will be appropriately honored with the usual accolades, a dinner or luncheon in his honor hosted by the college, given a certificate of appreciation for his service, and given the title of professor or instructor emeritus, whatever the case may be.

Not to do anything, not even to thank him for his long years of service, does not reflect well on the college administration, particularly so since as an institution it should be the epitome of propriety, high standards of conduct, not to mention good manners and graciousness.

Bill Stewart
via e-mail

An insult to intelligence, integrity

The NMC Administration's decision not to renew the contract of Mr. Sam McPhetres is an insult to the intelligence and integrity of the students and NMC. We as a community and members of NMC's student body and alumni consider Mr. McPhetres a living archive and icon. Not only does he expands the learning possibilities of students but he also gives visions of prosperity both in knowledge and personal enhancements to the CNMI as a whole. Please correct me if I'm wrong but, if you were to check on some present and former legislators out there, you will find some that have taken Mr. McPhetres' advice on the economy and the laws themselves and how their ideas would impact the CNMI as a whole.

One of the many things that Mr. McPhetres teaches his students is to make sure that information gathered is resolved actively to benefit everyone as a whole, instead of being reactive and not realizing the consequences that would follow.

Marian Kileleman
via e-mail

TRAVEL

From Page 10

Parole for Re-entry From Abroad

Sometimes situations arise that require you to depart without having had the opportunity to apply for advance parole prior to your departure. There could be a death or illness in your family in your home country or you or a family member may require emergency medical referral abroad. In such an event you would depart the CNMI without an advance parole document in your hand. You must then apply for advance parole for re-entry by preparing the same documents as you would if you were making the application prior to your departure with the following difference: you will need to mail or pouch your packet of documents to the following address:

DHS/USCIS
Attn: Chief, International Operations Division (Humanitarian Parole)
20 Massachusetts Ave., NW Room 3300
Washington, DC 20529-2100

Some form of delivery that gives you the ability to track the packet is preferable. Options include DHL, FedEx, UPS, American Express, Express Mail (USPS), Certified Mail (USPS);, and Registered Mail (USPS) or whatever equivalent is available from the place of mailing.

Please also send an e-mail to USCIS Saipan at uscis.saipan@dhs.gov informing them that you have applied for advance parole from abroad. Please include your name, date of birth, and evidence that you mailed the request to Washington, DC.

Next week's column will deal with yet other forms of parole available through USCIS.

The information contained in this column is intended as general information only, and not as individual legal advice. Readers should obtain professional legal advice before taking action with respect to their individual situations. Readers may submit questions regarding federalization or immigration issues to the authors by email to lexmarianas@pticom.com. Readers may also e-mail written questions through the Saipan Tribune *at editor@saipantribume.com.*

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

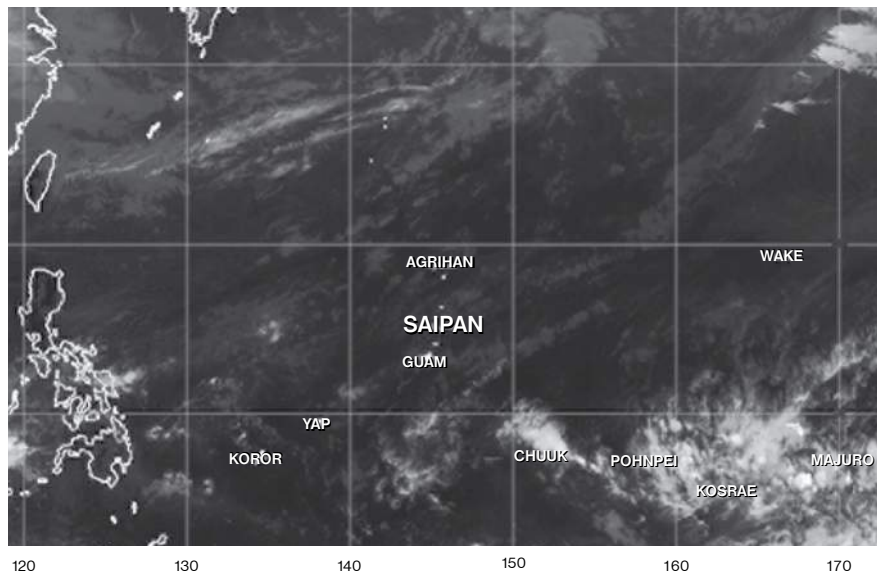
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲84 ▼75
Palau	Partly Sunny	▲88 ▼76
Yap	Sunny	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Rain	▲89 ▼77
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲88 ▼81
Kosrae	Showers	▲88 ▼77
Majuro	Showers	▲86 ▼79

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲63 ▼50
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲32 ▼16
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲73 ▼61
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲81 ▼67
London	Cloudy	▲44 ▼38
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲67 ▼49
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲87 ▼76
Melbourne	Sunny	▲88 ▼63
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲84 ▼71
New York	Cloudy	▲51 ▼34
Osaka	Showers	▲47 ▼37
Paris	Sunny	▲33 ▼30
Pusan	Cloudy	▲45 ▼23
Rome	Rain	▲60 ▼42
Salem	Rain	▲47 ▼41
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲58 ▼50
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲32 ▼19
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲47 ▼35
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲55 ▼37

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00 MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A weak cold front runs from 25N145E to 19N135E. Patchy light rain is found within 50 miles north of the front. Converging winds south of a ridge of high pressure near Okinawa are producing scattered showers north of Koror and Yap within 50 miles of a line from 14N130E to 16N136E. A frontal boundary curves northeastward from 22N172 to a low at 25N178E. Cloudiness and widespread rain associated with this boundary are found northeast of Wake Island or within 50 miles north of a line from 22N172E to 22N177 and between 22N and 25N from 176N to 180. A near equatorial trough runs from 9N151E through Chuuk to 5N153E southeastward to end at EQ170E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring north of Chuuk between 8N and 9N from 151E to 153E and over Butaritari Atoll between the equator and 3N from 167E to 176E. Northeast trade-winds are converging into the trough and additionally producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms between 4N and 9N from 159E to 171E. This third area is east of Pohnpei and includes Kosrae and Kwajalein. Upper-level divergence is enhancing convergent trade-winds to produce scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms within 50 miles of a line from 7N172E to 7N177E. The line then curves southeastward to end at 1N180.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

12:48 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet
8:08 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
1:07 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
5:46 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Wednesday	6:36 AM	5:49 PM
Thursday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Friday	6:37 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:15 AM	12:55 PM
Wednesday	6:09 AM	1:36 PM
Thursday	7:01 AM	2:18 PM
Friday	7:50 AM	3:02 PM
Saturday	8:34 AM	3:50 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 12, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:30am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1 via ICN	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

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Business

Shoppers turn out in droves but stick to lists

NEW YORK (AP)—Shoppers were making lists and checking them twice this weekend—and then sticking to them, holding out for good deals that analysts say could be coming this week.

While heavy traffic and little sign of clearance discounts during the weekend are clear improvements for retailers from last year's dismal season, many are still taking a wait-and-see approach.

"I'm playing chicken with retailers, still, until next weekend," said Matt Schuld, a shopper at a Target in Portland, Ore. He said a good deal is "imperative, as always."

Schuld might win the staredown. Retailers will begin amping up deals this week, NPD analyst Marshal Cohen said.

"This weekend is the last weekend for retailers to try to get whatever they could. Now it's the consumer's turn," he said. "Every retailer will pick a different day this week to deepen the discounts. Fifty percent off will be the starting point, and it will go up to 60 percent and 75 percent off within the store."

He expects shoppers to spend marginally more than last year. Electronics and cold-weather clothing like sweaters and scarves are among the most popular sellers.

Retailers have cut down on inventory all year and planned holiday sales well in advance this year.

BMO Capital Markets analyst John Morris, who tracks the amount and the depth of sales through his "sale rack index" said the index was up 8 percent this year but said it wasn't accelerating like last year.

"We're still not seeing retailers hit the panic button," he said. "It's still relatively controlled."

Accenture marks 1st sponsor to cut ties with Tiger Woods

By MARK WILLIAMS
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Global consulting firm Accenture Ltd. has ended its relationship with Tiger Woods, marking the first major sponsor to cut ties altogether with the golfer since his alleged infidelities surfaced and he announced an indefinite leave from the sport to work on his marriage.

In its first statement since the Woods' scandal erupted, Accenture said Sunday the golfer is "no longer the right representative" after the "circumstances of the last two weeks." The move ends a six-year relationship during which the firm credited its "Go on, be a Tiger" campaign with boosting its image significantly. Accenture has used Woods to personify its claimed attributes of integrity and high performance.

"After careful consideration and analysis, the company has determined that he is no longer the right representative for its advertising," Accenture said, adding that "it wishes only the best for Tiger Woods and his family."

The firm plans to immediately transition to a new advertising campaign, with a major effort scheduled to launch later in 2010. An Accenture spokeswoman declined to comment further.

Accenture's advertising campaign was almost entirely built around Woods and his success by portraying his greatness on the golf course by making a key putt or chipping out of the rough. If Woods had acknowledged mistakes and said he would be back in a month, Accenture might be able to ride it out, said Rick Burton, a professor of sports management at Syracuse University, in an interview.

Senate sends $1.1 trillion spending bill to Obama

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate on Sunday passed a $1.1 trillion spending bill with increased budgets for vast areas of the federal government, including health, education, law enforcement and veterans' programs.

The more-than-1,000-page package, one of the last essential chores of Congress this year, passed 57-35 and now goes to President Barack Obama for his signature.

The weekend action underlined the legislative crush faced by Congress as it tries to wind up the year. After the vote, the Senate immediately returned to the debate on health care legislation that has consumed its time and energy for weeks. Senate Democrats hope to reach a consensus in the coming days on Obama's chief domestic priority.

The spending bill combines six of the 12 annual appropriation bills for the 2010 budget year that began Oct. 1. Obama has signed into law five others.

The final one, a $626 billion defense bill, will be used as the base bill for another catch-all package of measures that Congress must deal with in the coming days. Those include action to raise the $12.1 trillion debt ceiling and proposals to stimulate the job market.

The spending bill passed Sunday includes $447 billion for departments' operating budgets and about $650 billion in mandatory payments for federal benefit programs such as Medicare and Medicaid. Those programs under immediate control of Congress would see increases of about 10 percent.

The FBI gets $7.9 billion, a $680 million increase over 2009; the Veterans Health Administration budget goes from $41 billion to $45.1 billion; and the National Institutes of Health receives $31 billion, a $692 million increase.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Traders will dissect Fed's language this week

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Investors expect the Federal Reserve to keep a key interest rate at a historic low level. Why? Because Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke said so. "The market has listened to him and really believes what Bernanke has said," said Daniel Penrod, senior industry analyst at the California Credit Union League. Last week, Bernanke said that he anticipates modest economic growth next year. That should push down unemployment, "but at a pace slower than we would like," he said. The message for investors: No rate hikes for now. That's enough assurance for investors to hold on to for the moment, but everyone knows that the record-low interest rates that are helping to boost stock and bond returns are going to have to go away at some point as the economy recovers. The only question is when.

Dubai woes loom as Gulf leaders prepare to meet

Emirates (AP)—Ongoing concerns about Dubai's financial woes could overshadow efforts to more closely align Gulf Arab nations' economies when the region's leaders meet Monday in Kuwait. The annual gathering of top officials from the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council economic bloc begins on the same day a closely watched $3.52 billion pile of Dubai debt comes due. Investors are eagerly awaiting details on how, or indeed whether, Dubai will cover the payment, which is seen as a key test of the indebted city-state's broader credit worthiness. "This is not a story that's going away," said Rachel Ziemba, a senior analyst at Roubini Global Economics who monitors Gulf economies. "This is the aftershocks, the reckoning after the credit crisis."

Economist Samuelson, Nobel laureate, dead at 94

NEW YORK (AP)—Economist Paul Samuelson, who won a Nobel prize for his effort to bring mathematical analysis into economics, helped shape tax policy in the Kennedy administration and wrote a textbook read by millions of college students, died Sunday. He was 94. Samuelson, who taught for decades at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, died at his home in Belmont, Mass., the school said in a statement announcing his death. President Barack Obama's chief economic adviser, Lawrence Summers, is his nephew. In 1970, Samuelson became just the second person, and first American, to win the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, created in 1968 by the Central Bank of Sweden. The other Nobels have been awarded since 1901. The award citation said Samuelson "has done more than any other contemporary economist to raise the level of scientific analysis in economic theory."

APAFS holds educational committee meeting

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Standing left to right: Masa-Aki Emesiochl, member of the College of Micronesia FSM Board of Regents & Minister of Education for the Republic of Palau; Jason Miyashita, APAFS Instructor; David O'Brien, vice president of finance and administration at the University of Guam; Gerry Cruz, APAFS Chairman; Dr. Robert Underwood, president of the University of Guam; Spensin James, president of the College of Micronesia FSM; Daniel Roland, APAFS Executive Director; Russell S. Ocampo, student, University of Guam; Dr. James Taylor, Associate Professor of Business and Public Administration, University of Guam. Seated: Mary Okada, president of Guam Community College and Dr. Patrick Tellei, president of Palau Community College.

Educators from around the Pacific converged on Guam last week to attend an Educational Committee Meeting hosted by the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies at the University of Guam.

The Dec. 8 meeting focused on reviewing, restructuring, and discussing 2010 plans for the association's student educational program, which targets both local and regional educational institutions.

This program includes Educational Seminars held at various educational institutions around the region, and the annual Pacific Region Investment Conference Educational Component designed to encourage understanding of investment and economic issues, which has in past years, rewarded students with financial assistance to attend the annual conferences.

In attendance were Dr. Robert Underwood, president of the University of Guam; David O'Brien, vice president of finance and administration at the University of Guam; Mary Okada, president of Guam Community College; Dr. Patrick Tellei, president of Palau Community College; Masa-Aki Emesiochl, member of the College of Micronesia FSM Board of Regents & Minister of Education for the Republic of Palau; Spensin James, president of the College of Micronesia FSM; and Dr. James Taylor, Associate Professor of Business and Public Administration at University of Guam.

"APAFS has held several educational seminars and rewarded many college students through the educational component of the annual conference, and I personally am always impressed at the participation we receive from colleges and universities across the Pacific," said APAFS Executive Director Daniel Roland. "It was important for the committee to get a jumpstart on 2010 plans for the student education program to keep this momentum going."

The APAFS Educational Program gives students in this region the opportunity to learn more about finance or investments, and helps them to better understand the economy of the Pacific region.

"These students are the next generation of fiduciaries, so this program is ultimately the most important program APAFS runs as an organization," Okada said. "Giving them a platform to learn and share their thoughts on our economy is a priority for APAFS, not only in our capacity as a professional organization but also because of our responsibility to our regional economies."

Leaders from several higher education institutions including College of the Marshall Islands, the College of Micronesia, Guam Community College, the University of Guam, the Northern Marianas College, Palau Community College and University of the South Pacific-Majuro serve as APAFS members.

Since 2000, APAFS has served to provide guidance and leadership for fiduciary institutions and investment professionals in the Asia Pacific region. The Association has embraced its role as an educator on financial literacy, consistently pushing for responsible fund management and prudent stewardship.

For more information about APAFS, visit www.apafs.org. ***(PR)***

Nation

ACROSS THE NATION

Suspect in 1981 tribal murders booked in Calif.

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP)—A former tribal security official-turned-preacher accused of killing a Cabazon tribal leader and two friends in 1981 has been extradited and is behind bars in California's Riverside County. Sheriff's Det. John Powers says James "Jimmy" Hughes was booked Saturday and jailed in Riverside. Hughes faces three counts of murder and a count of conspiracy for allegedly killing Fred Alvarez to prevent him from exposing illegal reservation activities. Hughes was arrested in September in Miami as he sat on a Honduras-bound plane. Earlier this month, a Florida judge ordered his extradition to California. He is scheduled to appear in Superior Court Dec. 17.

Nev. brothel aims to offer 1st male prostitutes

LAS VEGAS (AP)—The owner of a brothel more than two hours' drive from Las Vegas said she hopes to hire Nevada's first legal male prostitutes within a month, now that state health officials have approved a method to test men for infectious diseases. The world is ready for women, or even other men, to legally buy sex, said Shady Lady Ranch owner Bobbi Davis. Plus, being the first to offer male service could boost business in tough economic times, she said. "With so many other male revues going on in Vegas, we thought it was time to give this a try," Davis told The Associated Press. Until now, men have been effectively barred from legally plying the world's oldest profession in Nevada by the specificity of a state health law requiring prostitutes to undergo frequent cervical testing for sexually transmitted diseases.

Adultery still crime in NH after 200 years

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—The original punishments—including standing on the gallows for an hour with a noose around the neck—have been softened to a $1,200 fine, yet some lawmakers think it's time for the 200-year-old crime of adultery to come off New Hampshire's books. Seven months after the state approved gay marriage, lawmakers will consider easing government further from the bedroom with a bill to repeal the adultery law. "We shouldn't be regulating people's sex lives and their love lives," state Rep. Timothy Horrigan said. "This is one area the state government should stay out of people's bedrooms." Horrigan, D-Durham, and state Rep. Carol McGuire, R-Epsom, have teamed up on legislation to repeal the law. Horrigan signed on because he believes it continues New Hampshire's efforts toward marriage equality. In June, lawmakers voted to legalize gay marriage—a law that takes effect Jan. 1.

Avalanche fears, clouds hamper search for climbers

GOVERNMENT CAMP, Ore. (AP)—A cloud bank hugging the flanks of Mount Hood frustrated the air search for two missing climbers on Sunday, a day after their companion was found dead on a glacier on Oregon's highest mountain.

Rescuers had to bring in a helicopter and airplanes to conduct the search because new snow had created avalanche dangers for crews working on foot.

Skies had cleared Sunday morning, but the weather worsened again and the mountain became shrouded by a low cloud during the afternoon. The search aircraft—a helicopter and a fixed-wing airplane—returned to their bases. At nightfall, search crews ended operations for the day with plans to evaluate options Monday morning, said Jim Strovink, spokesman for the Clackamas County sheriff.

"The weather, that's what's hampering this operation," Strovink said.

The three climbers—26-year-old Luke T. Gullberg, 24-year-old Anthony Vietti and 29-year-old Katie Nolan—had begun their ascent on the west side of the mountain about 1 a.m. Friday and were due back that afternoon, but failed to return.

AP

A helicopter flies over Mount Hood in search of two missing climbers as seen from Government Camp, Ore., Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009. The body of one climber was removed from the mountain Saturday as two still remain missing.

On Saturday, crews found Gullberg's body on the glacier at the 9,000-feet level. Authorities said he was from Des Moines, Wash.

His equipment also was found scattered around the glacier, including a camera with at least 20 photos of the climbers. Crews have looked over the photos for landmarks and other clues to the location of the two missing climbers—Vietti, of Longview, Wash., and Nolan, of Portland.

"It looked like they were confident and having a good time," Strovink said of the photographs.

After eight inches of snow fell on the 11,249-foot mountain overnight, avalanche dangers in the higher elevations Sunday made a rescue mission on foot too risky.

"Nobody is going to want to tromp around in that snow," said Steve Rollins, a Portland Mountain Rescue leader.

Still, officials had not given up hope that Nolan and Vietti could still be found alive, calling them experienced climbers. Strovink said he didn't believe the climbers had a shovel, which could be used to build a snow cave to keep them out of the elements. But, he said, "They were well equipped otherwise."

The Oregonian newspaper reported Sunday that Gullberg was a sales clerk at the outdoor retailer and cooperative REI in Tukwila, Wash., and he studied writing and English at Central Washington University.

"He was very adventurous," Stacy Cleveland, his cousin, told the newspaper. "He did a lot of hiking and climbing and things a lot us would never attempt."

Relatives of the three climbers were gathered at Timberline Lodge, a ski lodge on the flank of Mount Hood and a staging area for the rescuers, to await more news. They were comforted by Dennis Simons, a nondenominational volunteer chaplain for the police and fire departments in nearby Sandy.

"They are grieving and hoping," he said.

Sen. Lieberman resists Medicare buy-in plan

WASHINGTON (AP)—Risking the wrath of Democrats, Sen. Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., threatened Sunday to join Republicans in opposing health care legislation if it permits uninsured individuals as young to 55 to purchase Medicare coverage.

Lieberman, whose vote is critical to the bill's prospects, expressed his opposition twice during the day: first in an interview with CBS, and more strongly later, according to Democratic officials, in a private meeting with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

Reid, who is hoping to pass the legislation by Christmas, needs 60 votes to overcome Republican objections, and has been counting on Lieberman to provide one.

But appearing on CBS, Lieberman said of the Medicare proposal, "Though I don't know exactly what's in it, from what I hear, I certainly would have a hard time voting for it because it has some of the same infirmities that the public option did.

"It will add taxpayer costs. It will add to the deficit. It's unnecessary," he added of a provision that Reid last week hailed as part of a breakthrough between liberals and moderates.

Democratic aides, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Lieberman later told Reid he would support a Republican-led filibuster against the bill if it contained the Medicare provision or permitted the government to sell insurance in competition with private companies.

The same aides added that Lieberman had responded differently last week when Reid asked him privately about the proposed Medicare provision. "He voiced support for the idea," said one official. Lieberman's public comments last week were also generally favorable. The aides spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they was not authorized to comment publicly.

In an interview that aired Sunday night—but was recorded last week—President Barack Obama voiced optimism about his call for sweeping legislation to expand coverage while cracking down on the insurance industry.

"I think it's going to pass out of the Senate before Christmas," he told CBS' "60 Minutes."

If Lieberman follows through on his plans, he leaves Democrats with few options as they try and pass legislation before Christmas. Most obviously, they could strip out the provisions he opposes, and hope liberals overcome their inevitable unhappiness and vote for the bill. For that approach to have any chance of success, Obama would have to lobby heavily in its favor.

Feds weigh public risk, evidence in terror probes

ATLANTA (AP)—A small group of FBI agents huddled outside a Home Depot in Atlanta in January 2006, watching a young man suspected of being linked to terrorists as he walked out the door with materials that could be used to make a bomb.

They knew Syed Haris Ahmed had researched bomb-making techniques online and shaved his head, as some jihadis have done before an attack. However, they had to make a quick decision faced by other terror investigators across the country: They could swoop in and keep him from potentially building a bomb, which could leave them with a case too weak to win a conviction. Or they could keep building a stronger case—and risk a potential terror attack.

"If we have a terrorist event, we could solve what happened. But that means we've lost," said Rick Maxwell, an assistant special agent in charge in Atlanta. "What we want to do is prevent them. It's much more difficult, but that's our goal."

In the end they held off, relying on federal explosive experts who told them the PVC pipe was not enough to create a dangerous explosive. They also sent local police pretending to be on a routine call to question Ahmed about the piping, which they determined was being used for a school project.

Ahmed and co-defendant Ehsanul Islam Sadequee were ultimately convicted of terror-related charges earlier this year, and federal prosecutors said the case exemplified their strategy of snuffing out potential plots in their earliest stages. Sadequee faces up to 60 years in prison, and Ahmed faces 15 years behind bars when the pair is sentenced Monday.

Gay mayor-elect: Victory shows Houston's diversity

HOUSTON (AP)—The day after Houston voters chose Annise Parker to become the city's first openly gay mayor, she did as she had throughout a contentious, hard-fought campaign: focused on the brick-and-mortar realities of running the country's fourth largest city.

Parker told a Sunday press conference about her transition team, her plans to change the running of the Houston Police Department and the financial constraints faced by the city.

Then, she paused to reflect on the significance of the election, which made Houston the largest U.S. city to elect an openly gay mayor.

"It's a historic election for my community, and I believe an election that will change some people's minds about the city of Houston," said Parker, 53. "It's a diverse, international city that welcomes everyone."

Parker, who began her political career as a gay activist, rose through the ranks of local politics to serve first on city council, then as city controller.

Parker

"I realize that I'm a role model, but I've been a role model for my community for 30 years," she said. "It's part of who I am, and I believe it makes me a better representative for the city of Houston."

Parker defeated former city attorney Gene Locke, 61, with 53.6 percent of the vote Saturday in a race that had a turnout of only 16.5 percent. Locke had hoped to become the city's second black mayor.

A little more than 152,000 residents turned out to cast ballots in the city, which has a population of 2.2 million. Of those voters, 81,743 chose Parker—some 11,000 more than voted for Locke. About 60,000 residents identify themselves as gay or lesbian.

A call to Locke's campaign was not immediately returned.

Parker's victory comes after several setbacks for gay rights activists. New York lawmakers earlier this month rejected a bill that would have made their state the sixth to allow marriage between same-sex couples.

Asia

Mindanao grapples with crisis after crisis

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Tribal gunmen freed 47 hostages in the southern Philippines on Sunday, but the region continued to be wracked by violence as suspected Islamic radicals staged a deadly jail break in which dozens of inmates were freed, including comrades accused of beheading marines.

The three-day hostage standoff in Agusan del Sur province and the jail raid on Basilan island come on the heels of a political massacre last month in a nearby frontier region in which 57 people were killed. The back-to-back crises underscore the complexity of conflicts raging in the country's south, an impoverished region awash with firearms, outlaws, political warlords and Muslim insurgents.

The remaining 47 hostages freed were among the more than 75 people, including children, who were snatched Thursday by gunmen trying to evade police serving warrants for a string of charges, including murder.

The kidnappers' jungle encampment had been surrounded by troops and snipers. Vice Governor Santiago Cane of Agusan del Sur said the gunmen—former government-armed militiamen—gave up their hostages and weapons after negotiators pledged not to have them arrested on the past charges or the abductions.

Several women and children were freed immediately after the kidnapping, leaving those still held crammed in small bamboo huts that leaked when it rained. Some had fever when they walked free.

"I'm happy that it's over," said 35-year-old Josafer Bautista, who was taken with the other freed hostages for a checkup at a hospital in Agusan del Sur's capital of Prosperidad, about 515 miles (830 kilometers) southeast of Manila.

The gunmen still have to be investigated and undergo questioning before they will be turned over to a Roman Catholic bishop while their murder cases are reviewed by a tribal court, regional police commander Lino Calingasan said.

Joebert Perez, the leader of the hostage-takers, denied the murder charges, which arose from a violent land dispute with a rival clan.

Government negotiators, invoking a law that protects the rights of ethnic groups, agreed to Perez's demand to have his case handled by a tribal court instead of a regular tribunal. Police promised to disarm his rivals, whom Perez has accused of killing some of his relatives, officials said.

On southern Basilan island, a new security dilemma unfolded early Sunday when about 70 suspected Islamic radicals stormed their way into the provincial jail with a sledgehammer, boltcutters and guns, provincial Vice Governor Al Rasheed Sakalahul said.

They freed several insurgents, including a rebel commander and another guerrilla accused of involvement in the beheading of 10 marines in a 2007 clash. The jail assault—in which a total of 31 inmates were freed—sparked a brief clash that killed a jail guard and one of the attackers, he said.

Among those who escaped were five militants from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, a large Muslim rebel group engaged in peace talks with the government, and 12 from the smaller but more violent Abu Sayyaf group, which has been linked to al-Qaida, regional military commander Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino said.

RP *muslim rebels deny hand in jail break*

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Muslim rebels who have resumed peace talks with the Philippine government said Monday they were not behind a deadly jail break in the country's volatile south that freed 31 criminals and guerrillas, including militants accused of beheadings.

About 70 attackers used a sledgehammer and bolt cutters Sunday to punch a hole in the provincial Basilan jail and spring 31 people, including alleged hard-core members of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group, officials said.

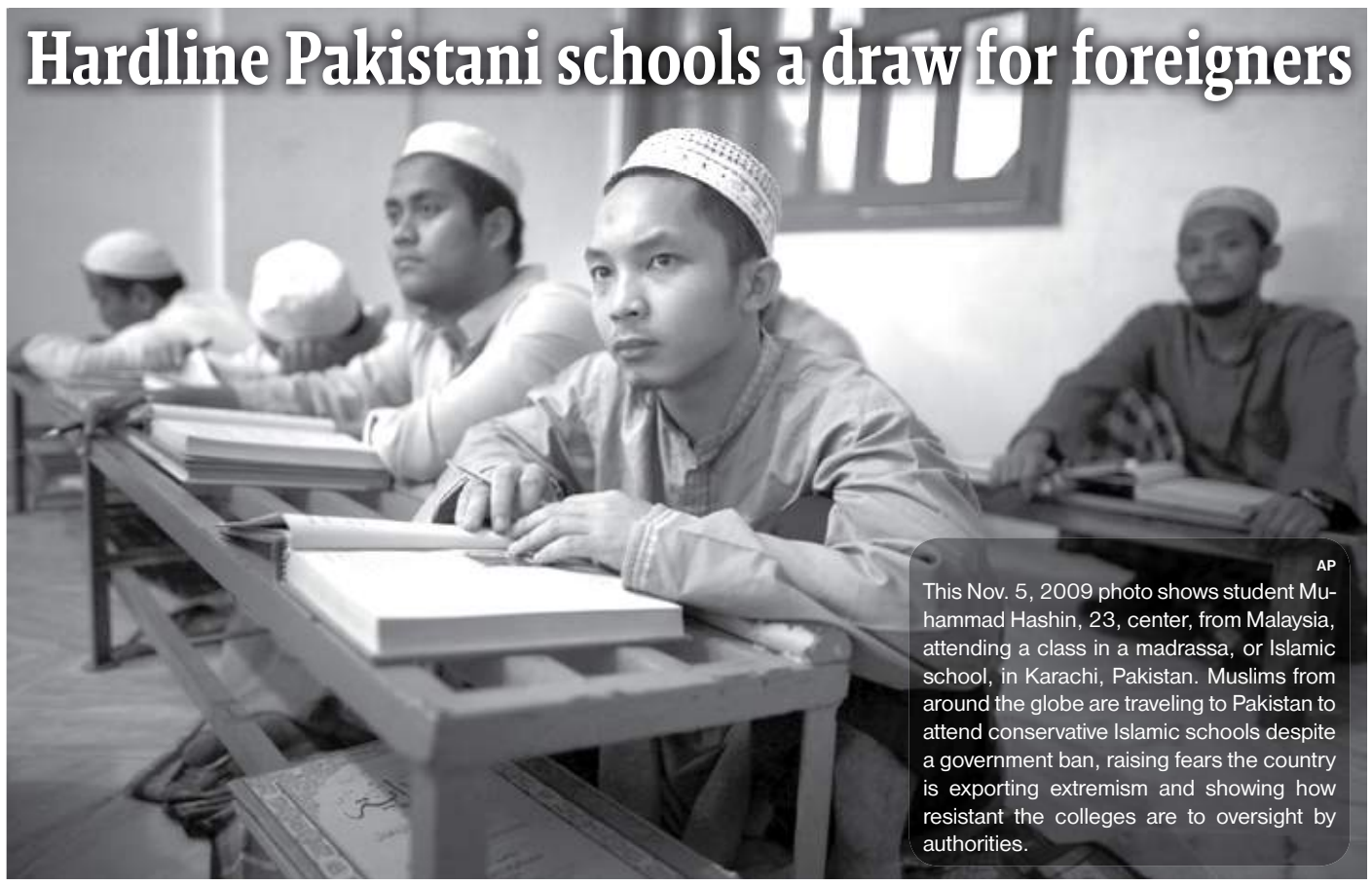
A guard and one of the attackers were killed as security forces dispatched helicopters to help track down the fleeing inmates, said Basilan Vice Gov. Al Rasheed Sakalahul.

Among those who escaped were five members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the main separatist group negotiating an autonomy for minority Muslims, and 12 from the smaller but more violent Abu Sayyaf, notorious for kidnappings, beheadings and bombings, said regional military commander Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino.

The fugitives included Dan Asnawi, a Moro rebel commander, and another guerrilla accused of beheading 10 marines during a 2007 clash between troops and a combined force of Abu Sayyaf and Moro rebels on Basilan Island, said marine spokesman Maj. Joel Lazo.

Eid Kabalu, spokesman for the Moro group, said the rebels were not involved in the beheadings or Sunday's jail break. The Moro rebels and the Abu Sayyaf have little contact, but the military says they sometimes cooperate on Basilan because some family and clan members end up on both sides.

Hardline Pakistani schools a draw for foreigners



AP

This Nov. 5, 2009 photo shows student Muhammad Hashin, 23, center, from Malaysia, attending a class in a madrassa, or Islamic school, in Karachi, Pakistan. Muslims from around the globe are traveling to Pakistan to attend conservative Islamic schools despite a government ban, raising fears the country is exporting extremism and showing how resistant the colleges are to oversight by authorities.

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Anas bin Saleem, a 12-year-old American, spends seven hours a day sitting cross-legged on the floor memorizing the Quran.

He is one of thousands of foreigners who have flocked to conservative Islamic schools in Pakistan, despite a government ban, the Associated Press has found through interviews with officials, documents, visits to the schools and encounters with dozens of students.

Pakistan and foreign governments consider the international students a potential security threat. The students could export extremism back to their own countries, or stay and fight in Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan, where the United States is battling a resurgent Taliban eight years after the invasion. Pakistan stopped granting student visas in 2005, but many students still arrive on travel visas and never leave when they expire.

"We are concerned, but what can we do?" said an official from one Southeast Asian embassy in Pakistan who asked for anonymity because he did not want to upset his hosts. "We can't stop people from traveling...It is their constitutional right."

Officials are concerned in general about foreigners coming to Pakistan for training in militancy. Most recently, five young American Muslims were arrested after meeting with representatives of an al-Qaida linked group and asking for training, a Pakistani law enforcement official said Thursday.

And in a separate case, the U.S. accuses another American, David Coleman Headley, of attending militant training camps in Pakistan and conspiring with members of the Pakistan-based militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba to conduct surveillance on potential targets in the Indian city of Mumbai before the deadly terror attacks there in November 2008.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Fighting in Pakistan kills 7 militants, 2 troops

PARACHINAR, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistani soldiers battled militants in a tribal region close to the Afghan border Sunday, killing seven insurgents but losing two of their own in skirmishes in an area where al-Qaida and the Taliban have long sought sanctuary, officials said. The fighting overnight in the Kurram tribal region comes amid an offensive by 30,000 Pakistani troops in nearby South Waziristan. Troops moved into two areas in Kurram on Saturday and engaged in fierce battles that killed 15 Taliban militants and three soldiers, three officials said on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Afghan official: 8 policemen killed at checkpoint

KABUL (AP)—Eight Afghan policemen were killed Monday in an attack on a checkpoint in northeast Afghanistan. Mohammad Akbar Barakzai, the governor of Baghlan province, said the policemen, who were members of the Afghan National Police, died after enemy militants attacked them before dawn. "The policemen who were killed in the attack were on duty to provide security for the military convoys and local people in the main highway in Baghlan province," Barakzai said.

Aussie, Chinese officials urge pandas to reproduce

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP)—Australian and Chinese officials urged two bamboo-munching giant pandas on Sunday to consider reproducing during their 10-year residency Down Under. Wang Wang and Funi, on loan from China, arrived at the Adelaide Zoo two weeks ago but were officially welcomed Sunday by leaders at the opening ceremony of their 8 million Australian dollar ($7.25 million) enclosure. Their exhibit will open to the public on Monday. "Look after yourselves, keep healthy and active, eat your greens and maybe, when the time is right, think about starting a family," Governor General Quentin Bryce said in a speech directed at Funi and Wang Wang, who were sprawled against nearby boulders, chewing bamboo shoots. "There are not enough of you in this world."

Sri Lanka war refugees face uneasy homecoming

BATTICALOA, Sri Lanka (AP)—Three years ago, Vairamuttu Bavani left her home in eastern Sri Lanka to attend her cousin's wedding in the north.

She didn't make it back until September.

Trapped by the civil war, Bavani, a Tamil, lost six members of her family and both her legs to a bomb. She spent months detained in an overcrowded refugee camp. And even now, she remains under tight scrutiny by local authorities, who have visited her almost every day since her return from the northern Vanni region, she said.

"They ask me where I went in the Vanni and what I was doing there," said Bavani, 25, who spends her days seated on the floor of her sister's house, fighting boredom.

Bavani is one of tens of thousands of refugees who are struggling to rebuild their lives in post-war Sri Lanka, often under tight control from the government. During the final months of the war, nearly 300,000 mostly Tamil civilians were trapped between rebels and advancing government troops, and these refugees are now in various stages of limbo.

The quarter-century war cost 80,000 to 100,000 their lives, as the Tamil Tiger rebels fought for a separate state for Sri Lanka's Tamil minority. After the rebels finally lost in May, the government herded the remaining civilians, along with some straggling rebel fighters, to overcrowded camps.

World

Attacker hurls statuette, bloodies Berlusconi face

ROME (AP)—An attacker hurled a statuette at Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi, striking the leader in the face at the end of a rally Sunday and leaving the stunned 73-year-old media mogul with a broken nose and bloodied mouth.

Police said the 42-year-old man accused of attacking Berlusconi as he signed autographs in Milan was immediately taken into custody. The Italian leader was rushed to a hospital where he was being held overnight.

The attack occurred at a time when Berlusconi, one of Italy's wealthiest men, is embroiled in a sex scandal, a divorce case with his wife and public protests demanding his resignation.

TV showed the stunned leader with blood under his nose, on his mouth and under one eye as he was lifted to his feet by aides after Sunday's attack. He was hustled into the back of a car, but he immediately got out, apparently to show he was not badly injured.

But Berlusconi suffered a "small fracture" of the nose, two broken teeth and an injury to the inside and outside of his lip, said Paolo Klun, chief spokesman for Milan's San Raffaele Hospital.

"He wanted to go home right away, but he is being held as a precaution" for overnight observation, Klun said. The premier suffered "a significant bruising trauma from this blunt instrument that was hurled at him."

Police first said it appeared the assailant had punched Berlusconi in the face while clutching a souvenir statue of Milan's Duomo, or cathedral with gargoyles that symbolizes the city. But state TV later showed a video, somewhat blurry, of what appeared to be the attacker's hand coming close to Berlusconi's face while holding the statue, then letting go of the object at the last minute as it hit the premier's face.

Berlusconi was "very shaken and demoralized," Klun said. "He didn't understand very well what happened to him."

Immediately after the attack, the premier, after getting out of the car and without saying a word, was pulled back into the vehicle by bodyguards.

The attack occurred after Berlusconi had just finished delivering a long, vigorous speech at the rally to thousands of applauding supporters from his Freedom People party in the square outside the cathedral at about 6:30 p.m.

Officials at Milan's police headquarters said they didn't immediately know what the miniature Duomo statue was made of.

Berlusconi's spokesman, speaking by telephone from the emergency room from San Raffaele hospital where the premier was taken, told Sky TG24 TV that doctors had decided to keep Berlusconi in the hospital overnight for observation. "We'll see what the doctors say tomorrow morning," spokesman Paolo Bonauiti told Sky. The exams of his jaw area included a CT scan, Bonaiuti said.

Police identified the man they were questioning as Massimo Tartaglia, 42. They said Tartaglia didn't have any criminal record but had suffered psychological problems in the past.

AP

This video image made available by RAI TG3 shows Italian Premier Silvio Berlusconi sitting in his vehicle after an attacker hurled a statuette striking the leader in the face at the end of a rally in Milan, Italy on Sunday Dec. 13, 2009.

Chilean billionaire beat leftists, now faces runoff

SANTIAGO, Chile (AP)—Right-wing billionaire Sebastian Pinera beat three leftists in Sunday's presidential election but failed to obtain a majority, setting up a runoff against a veteran of the coalition that has ruled Chile for two decades of democracy.

The Harvard-educated Pinera had 44 percent to 30 percent for the ruling center-left coalition's candidate, former President Eduardo Frei. Breakaway Socialist Rep. Marco Enriquez-Ominami had 20 percent, and communist Jorge Arrate had 6 percent, with 98 percent of the votes counted.

Pinera

The key question in the Jan. 17 runoff between Pinera and Frei is whether leftists can unify to fend off the most moderate candidate Chile's right has ever had.

A win by Pinera, 60, would install a right-wing government in Chile for the first time since Gen. Augusto Pinochet's 1973-1990 dictatorship—but only if Pinera persuades enough leftists to take a chance on him.

"We have to understand that this win doesn't belong to us," Pinera said in a victory speech to his party members. "It belongs to all Chileans, to the humble people, to the poor and the middle class, the people who most need change from their government."

Frei appealed for leftists to come together, saying he would take on his rivals' ideas as if they were his own, that women and young people would have a prominent place in his government, and that he would push for reforms to end the big alliances' domination of the political process.

"The people have told us that there are things they don't like, that things must change, and I share this mission," said Frei, 67.

The push for 350: Contradictions and carbon levels

COPENHAGEN (AP)—As police cracked down on climate protesters, church bells tolled 350 times Sunday to impress on the U.N. global warming conference a number that is gaining a following, but is also awash in contradictions.

Conference negotiators went behind closed doors in talks to pin down an elusive new pact on climate, talks in which the figure 350 looms as a goal for true believers, but one that appears impossible based on progress so far.

It refers to 350 parts per million of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, the highest concentration that some leading scientists say the world can handle without sparking dangerous climate effects.

"It's the most important number in the world," said Bill McKibben, founder of the environmental activist group 350.org. "It's the line between habitability on this planet and a really, really desolate future."

Not everyone buys into that. But an entire environmental group has sprung up around the number, pushing 350 as a goal, sporting it on T-shirts and flags waved by throngs of protesters that marched to the conference center over the weekend. About 100 nations at the U.N. climate summit have signed on to the idea of heading for 350.

Actually, the world has lived with more than 350 for a while.

The last time the Earth had 350 ppm of carbon dioxide in the air was a generation ago, in the fall of 1989. This year CO2 pushed over the 390 level. When scientists started measuring carbon dioxide in 1958 it was 315.

Since the atmosphere passed the 350 level, ice sheets have been melting and other dramatic changes have been happening. Prominent scientists—notably NASA's James Hansen, one of the earliest to warn about global warming, and Rajendra Pachauri, head of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change—have said 350 is the only safe level of carbon dioxide in the air.

Still, many economists, political leaders, and even some scientists believe that the worst effects of global warming can be avoided even with less stringent actions.

But there is general agreement among negotiators and climate scientists that continued global warming will lead to dramatic changes that mean more widespread drought in some regions, greater flooding along coastlines, stronger storms and the loss of species.

On Sunday, hundreds of churches around the world had signed up to ring bells at 3:50 p.m. in their respective time zones.

Hamas celebrates anniversary in war-damaged Gaza

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—The Islamic militant group Hamas is marking the anniversary of its 1987 founding with celebrations in the Gaza Strip.

The organization hopes to show it still has support despite four years of rule that have led Gaza into war, poverty and isolation.

Gaza is decked out in Islamic green, with Hamas flags fluttering from roofs and lampposts. Hamas' radio and TV stations are exhorting Gazans to attend a mass rally after midday prayers.

Since last year's anniversary celebrations, Hamas has suffered several setbacks, key among them Israel's military offensive against Gaza last winter.

Hamas has been unable to rebuild homes and infrastructure destroyed in the assault because Israel and Egypt continue to enforce a border blockade.

WORLD BRIEFS

Spain: Catalan villages vote for independence

VILAFRANCA DEL PENEDES, Spain (AP)—A smattering of villages and towns in rich, independence-minded Catalonia gave a lukewarm embrace to the idea of breaking away from Spain in a rare vote Sunday at the grassroots level. Skeptics called the nonbinding vote an exercise in futility for the proud region centered around Barcelona, which boasts a distinct cultural identity and accounts for about one-fifth of Spain's economy but says it get does not get enough in return. But an umbrella group of civic organizations behind the referendum saw it as a way to assert the distinct identity of what they regard as a country within a country and to pressure politicians in Madrid and Barcelona to pay more attention to them.

Student protesters deny burning Khomeini photos

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Hundreds of students at Tehran University renewed anti-government protests for a second week on Sunday, accusing authorities of fabricating images of demonstrators burning photos of the Islamic Republic's revered founder. Students moved to the forefront of opposition on the streets with massive protests last week. They say authorities are using the images of burning photos as a pretext to crack down on their protests, which have helped revitalize the pro-reform movement. State television has repeatedly shown images, ostensibly taken during student-led protests on Dec. 7, of unidentified hands burning and tearing up pictures of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. It was a grave and illegal insult against the former leader, still widely respected in the country. The elite Revolutionary Guard, the country's most powerful military force, called for the trial and punishment of those responsible.

UN: 2 UN hostages freed from Darfur

NEW YORK (AP)—Two civilian members of the joint United Nations-African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur who were held hostage for more than 100 days have been released, the U.N. said Sunday. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's office released a statement saying he was "deeply gratified" to learn of the development. The two staffers, a man and a woman, were taken at gunpoint in West Darfur on Aug. 29. The abductors have not been publicly identified. The United Nations has been involved in delicate diplomacy to get cooperation on the issue from Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir.

Overdrive

2010 SUBARU OUTBACK

A super-sized Subaru, stuffed for the holiday

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

CORNWALL, N.Y.—The road was clogged with cars, trucks and law enforcement vehicles winding in and out of the Woodbury Common Premium Outlets mall near here. It was a miserable end to an otherwise pleasant drive up the Palisades Interstate Parkway to the New York State Thruway to Interstate 87 North, where, somewhere near Exit 14, life became an interminable crawl, a holiday turned to entrapment among sale-crazed consumers heading toward the checkout counters in the sprawling shopping complex.

It was madness we had hoped to avoid, planned carefully to escape. Thanksgiving dinner at our oldest daughter's house in Cornwall, a few miles above the Woodbury shopping center, was happiness filled with family, friends and fine food.

THE WASHINGTON POST

The 2010 Subaru Outback is a longer, wider, more accommodating version of the car.

Dinner started and ended late. But that was OK. Transportation was in the driveway, including this week's subject mobile, the 2010 Subaru Outback 3.6R Limited.

We had spied the Woodbury shopping forces building in and around Interstate 87 as early as 5:30 p.m. Thanksgiving Day. But we weren't worried. They were heading north. We would be driving south after dinner, returning our guests to their homes in Manhattan and Brooklyn. We thought the shoppers would be gone by the time we returned to Cornwall in the wee hours Friday morning.

It was a fantasy aided by the longer, wider, more accommodating version of the Subaru Outback in our possession—an all-wheel-drive wagon morphing toward sport-utility-vehicle status.

We'd earlier debated the wisdom of Subaru's adoption of the bigger-is-better approach, which the ever-so-practical Japanese automobile manufacturer had long eschewed. But with five well-fed adult passengers and their luggage in tow, the larger dimensions of the new Outback proved a good fit—good enough for one of our guests to fall comfortably asleep until we parked in front of her Brooklyn home.

The return drive from Brooklyn to Cornwall was pleasant enough in the beginning. By now, we had put nearly 800 miles on the Outback 3.6R Limited, driving from Northern Virginia to Cornwall, and driving to and from New York City. We liked the new wagon. Its ride and overall passenger comfort were much improved over that of its 2009-model siblings, one of which our family owns. There discernibly was more space. There also appeared to be more attention to detail in the new wagon in the matter of interior fit and finish.

The 256-horsepower, horizontally opposed six-cylinder engine in the tested Outback 3.6R Limited was more fun to drive than the 170-horsepower, flat 2.5-liter, four-cylinder engine in the 2009 Outback we own.

But at 25 miles per gallon on the highway in the 3.6 R Limited, compared with 26 mpg for the four-cylinder version, fuel-economy in the larger Outback remained decent.

And so we were happy—with the Outback 3.6R Limited and with the way we had spent our holiday weekend—until we reached the vicinity of Exit 14 on I-87 North, returning from Brooklyn.

There we were, caught in a trap of metal, rubber and tailpipe exhaust. Unbelievable! We're talking a 1:30 a.m. traffic jam the morning after Thanksgiving.

We crawled from Exit 14 to Exit 16 for three hours. We returned to Cornwall convinced that the Almighty had played a joke on us. That morning after Thanksgiving, we were the turkeys.

NUTS & BOLTS

BY WARREN BROWN
THE WASHINGTON POST

THE BOTTOM LINE

Since its inception in the mid-1990s, the Subaru Outback has been the perfect answer for many people who want a sport-utility vehicle without the size, egregious fuel consumption and often difficult ingress-egress. The larger size of the new Outback will do more to please than offend those buyers. But here's hoping that Subaru does not stray too far from its usual common-sense approach to reality.

RIDE, ACCELERATION AND HANDLING

Ride and acceleration get excellent marks here. But the 3.6R Limited's handling proved a bit dicey in sharp curves, where slow speeds were needed to keep its rear end in line.

HEAD-TURNING QUOTIENT

Subaru creates controversy even when it's aiming for the mainstream, as it's doing with the elongated and oddly muscular exterior of the new Outback. Subaru missed, again.

BODY STYLE/LAYOUT

The 2010 Subaru Outback is a front-engine, all-wheel-drive mid-size wagon with four side doors and a rear lift gate.

ENGINES/TRANSMISSIONS

For buyers seeking slightly better fuel economy, there is a 2.5-liter, flat four-cylinder engine ("flat" and "horizontally opposed" are used interchangeably to denote a side-by-side cylinder layout) with a maximum 170 horsepower and 170 foot-pounds of torque. A six-speed manual transmission is standard with that engine. A continuously variable automatic is optional. For drivers wanting more power with only a modest reduction in fuel economy, the tested 3.6-liter, flat six-cylinder engine with 256 horsepower and 247 foot-pounds of torque is the way to go. It is mated to a five-speed transmission that can be shifted automatically or manually.

CAPACITIES

There are seats for five people. Cargo capacity is 71 cubic feet. The fuel tank holds 18.5 gallons of recommended regular gasoline.

Mileage: 18 miles per gallon in the city and 25 mpg on the highway.

SAFETY

Front and rear ventilated disc brakes with four-wheel antilock protection, electronic brake force distribution, electronic stability and traction control, side and head air bags, rear-seat adjustable head restraints, and tire pressure monitoring system are standard.

PRICE

The 2010 Subaru Outback 3.6R Limited starts at $30,995. The dealer's invoice price on that model is $29,024. Price as tested is $35,146, including $3,456 in options (power glass roof and onboard navigation with backup camera) and $695 in destination charges. Dealer's price as tested is $32,562. Prices are sourced from Subaru; Edmunds.com; and Cars.com, an affiliate of The Washington Post.

Toyota to start selling plug-in hybrids in 2011

By YURI KAGEYAMA
AP BUSINESS WRITER

TOKYO (AP)—Toyota showed its new plug-in hybrid Monday, available for leasing this month in Japan, the U.S. and Europe, and promised the green vehicle for sale to regular consumers by 2011 at an "affordable" price.

The plug-in Prius is the first from Toyota Motor Corp. packed with a more powerful battery called lithium-ion that's different from the batteries used in Prius hybrids on roads today. A plug-in is even friendlier to the environment than the regular Prius because it travels longer as an electric vehicle.

About 600 of the vehicles will be introduced in Japan, the U.S. and Europe—230 in Japan, 150 in the U.S. and 200 in Europe—over the first half of 2010 starting this month, the company said.

AP

In this Oct. 19, 2005, file photo a Toyota Prius hybrid compact car is exhibited at the Tokyo Motor Show in Makuhari, east of Tokyo.

Toyota's plug-in travels 23.4 kilometers as an electric vehicle on a single charge, and gets 57 kilometers a liter in mileage. When the charge runs out, a plug-in starts running like a regular hybrid, ensuring drivers won't run out of power on the road.

Toyota declined to give a leasing price, saying that it was being set with customers.

Executive Vice President Takeshi Uchiyamada said he could not give an estimate for the vehicle's price when it goes on sale in 2011.

"I can only say it will be a price that will have potential buyers seeing a plug-in as a viable option," he said.

Uchiyamada said many hurdles remain for electric vehicles to become widespread, including limited cruising range and cost for the battery, making a plug-in still the best practical option.

He said Toyota was waiting until 2011 before commercial sales to gain feedback from users during the leasing period.

"We have been working on developing efficient powertrains to be able to use oil as efficiently as possible," he said. "But many hurdles remain for alternative fuels."

Life & Style

AP critics pick the decade's top films

By CHRISTY LEMIRE and DAVID GERMAIN
AP MOVIE WRITERS

Years pass and tastes change, at least a little. In choosing their top films of the past decade, Associated Press movie critics David Germain and Christy Lemire stuck closely to their favorites from each year.

AP Movie Writer David Germain:

"Pan's Labyrinth" (No. 1 for 2006)—Writer-director Guillermo del Toro presents a wondrous hybrid of stark historical drama and wildly inventive fantasy in this saga of a girl (Ivana Baquero) whose encounter with an ancient forest spirit offers escape from her bleak life in 1944 Fascist Spain. The chilling images are as fanciful as anything Terry Gilliam's ever dreamed up, and the film offers a marvelously ambiguous finale that could be the downer of the year—or pure bliss.

"You Can Count On Me" (No. 1 for 2000)—The perfect script meets the perfect cast. Writer-director Kenneth Lonergan captures the essence of sibling unity and disharmony in a taut comic drama propelled by tremendous performances from Laura Linney and Mark Ruffalo. This small-budget Sundance prize winner is wistful, hopeful, celebratory and hauntingly sad all at once. On screen, family matters don't get more exquisite than this.

ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
BEST FOREIGN LANGUAGE FILM
the BARBARIAN INVASIONS
"A Masterpiece"
"Two Thumbs Way Up!"
"Smart, Funny And Moving!"
"One Of The Best Pictures Of The Year!"

"The Barbarian Invasions" (No. 1 for 2003)—Sentiment and cynicism in perfect blend. Writer-director Denys Arcand crafts a sly sketch of intellectuals who've grown emotionally jaundiced by trying times yet still throw a whale of a party, in this case, for a dying pal (Remy Girard). His reconciliation with an estranged son (Stephane Rousseau) and final farewell to loved ones is heartbreaking, while Marie-Josee Croze brings a sublime damaged-goods grace as a junkie who scores heroin to ease the dying man's pain.

"Once" (No. 2 for 2007)—This may be as real as new love gets on screen: Awkward, inspiring, nervous, hopeful, passionate, impossible, frustrating, and in the end, left in limbo for another day. The micro-budgeted tale from writer-director John Carney stars two non-actors, musicians Glen Hansard as an Irish busker and Marketa Irglova as an Eastern European immigrant. They meet, fall head over heels and, literally, make beautiful, Academy Award-winning music together.

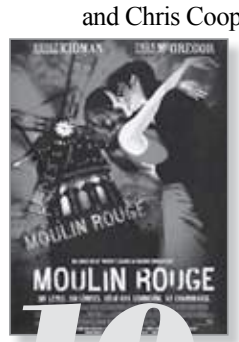
"O Brother, Where Art Thou?" (No. 7 for 2000)—A Klan rally that resembles the march of the Wicked Witch's guards in "The Wizard of Oz"? Must be the Coen brothers. Their Depression-era take on "The Odyssey" is a Looney Tunes successor to "Sullivan's Travels" that lets George Clooney go deliriously over the top as leader of a Three Stooges-style trio hilariously rounded out by John Turturro and Tim Blake Nelson. With T Bone Burnett as maestro, the savory songs brought on a roots-music revival that continues today.

"The Hurt Locker" (No. 1 for 2009)—The first great Iraq War film proves so universal that it can stand among the classics from past wars. Director Kathryn Bigelow drops viewers in at ground zero for a disturbingly close and claustrophobic look at the strains of disabling bombs for a living. Ably supported by Anthony Mackie and Brian Geraghty, Jeremy Renner is fierce, slow, frightening and tragic as a sergeant so addicted to the adrenaline rush of defusing explosives that he can no longer conceive of another way of life.

"The Saddest Music in the World" (No. 1 for 2004)—Filmmaker Guy Maddin spins a blissfully twisted tale of a legless Depression-era beer baroness (Isabella Rossellini) who stages a contest to find the world's gloomiest tunes, and a can-do American (Mark McKinney) determined to win the prize for the Yanks. The distorted black-and-white images and demented music perfectly complement Maddin's absurdist tone.

"WALL-E" (No. 2 for 2008)—If we all had this plucky little robot's work ethic, we wouldn't have fallen into a recession. The animation masters at Pixar have delivered a true innovation, a robot love story tucked in a cautionary environmental tale wrapped in a sci-fi saga, with romantic leads who communicate adorably in mechanical beeps and squeals. The title character of Andrew Stanton's adventure is beyond endearing as he toils alone to clean up filthy old Earth after everybody else has left.

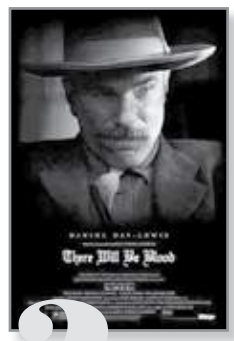
"Adaptation" (No. 1 for 2002)—"Being John Malkovich" writer Charlie Kaufman and director Spike Jonze succeed splendidly in creating a film about absolutely everything. Their tall tale of an insecure screenwriter is a spot-on rendering of artist self-loathing, and through cryptic philosophizing becomes a universal story on adapting to life. Nicolas Cage is at his best since "Leaving Las Vegas," with great support from Meryl Streep and Chris Cooper.



"Moulin Rouge" (No. 1 for 2001)—Sting's "Roxanne" as an ominous tango? This IS the reinvention of the Hollywood musical. As director Baz Luhrmann notes of heroine Nicole Kidman, "She sings, she dances, she dies. ... She's broad comedy and high tragedy." Kidman and co-star Ewan McGregor are corny, endearing, passionate and doomed in this dazzling pop-tune grab-bag that busts up the joint by tossing all musical conventions out the door.

AP Movie Critic Christy Lemire:

"No Country for Old Men" (No. 1 for 2007)—This breathtaking saga of crime and carnage along the Rio Grande emerges as the Coen brothers' masterwork among their bold and eclectic filmography. In adapting Cormac McCarthy's novel about the repercussions of a ruined drug deal, Joel and Ethan Coen (and the great cinematographer Roger Deakins) have created an evocative, beautifully bleak landscape. Josh Brolin and Tommy Lee Jones both give subtly powerful performances, but Javier Bardem is chilling in his Oscar-winning supporting turn as an eccentric serial killer.



"There Will Be Blood" (No. 6 for 2007)—An inventively gorgeous yet wildly weird epic about greed, lies, manipulation and insanity, with a terrifying leading performance from Oscar-winner Daniel Day-Lewis as a ruthless California oil man. Except for its inescapable intensity, you'd never know this was a Paul Thomas Anderson movie. All his usual stylistic tricks are gone; the "Boogie Nights" and "Magnolia" director seems more focused on character and storytelling, and he leaves you gasping.

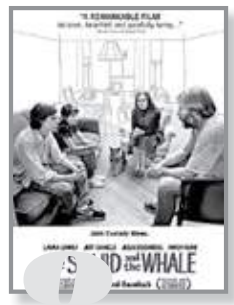
"American Splendor" (No. 1 for 2003)—A film unlike any other that year, and perhaps unlike any other, period. Wildly ambitious and imaginative, and consistently successful. Part feature and part documentary with some animation tossed in, the story of cranky comic book writer Harvey Pekar is full of sharp comic observations. As Pekar, Paul Giamatti is vividly funny and sad, usually at the same time.

"Far From Heaven" (No. 1 for 2002)—This would have been one of the best films of 2002 based solely on its exquisite cinematography and production design. Add Julianne Moore's complex performance and writer-director Todd Haynes' keenly observant script, both Oscar-nominated, and you have a movie that's nearly flawless. Haynes' loving homage to the Technicolor female-driven melodramas of the 1950s looks and feels so authentic, it makes you forget you're watching a new movie.

"Sideways" (No. 1 for 2004)—Also starring Paul Giamatti, further proving that beneath his character-actor looks lie the talent and versatility of a leading man. Disarmingly written and beautifully cast, with equal amounts of humor and heart, Alexander Payne's middle-aged, coming-of-age tale of loneliness, love of wine and unlikely relationships resonates long after the lights go up. Superb supporting work from Virginia Madsen, Thomas Haden Church and Sandra Oh.

"Memento" (No. 3 for 2001)—Told backward, writer-director Christopher Nolan's revenge thriller leaves you reeling over what you just saw—or didn't see. Its narrative approach is ingenious (and turned out to be hugely influential), and it must have been incredibly hard to craft and make all the details fit. As a man seeking revenge for his wife's murder, Guy Pearce is dark and tormented. And in supporting roles, Carrie-Anne Moss and Joe Pantoliano are perfectly mysterious.

"Mystic River" (No. 7 for 2003)—A modern-day Shakespearean tragedy, this is one of Clint Eastwood's best ever as director, more haunting over time than even his 2004 best-picture winner, "Million Dollar Baby." A gripping, gorgeous film about revenge, friendship and lost innocence in a richly detailed Boston setting. Excellent performances from an incredible cast: Sean Penn, Tim Robbins, Kevin Bacon, Marcia Gay Harden and Laura Linney.



"The Squid and the Whale" (No. 1 for 2005)—There isn't a false note in this darkly funny story about married writers who are divorcing, and how the split affects their sons. Writer-director Noah Baumbach's film, loosely based on his own '80s adolescence in

See AP on next page

Obamas join stars for Christmas benefit concert

WASHINGTON (AP)—The nation's capital got in the holiday spirit Sunday night when music legends Neil Diamond and Mary J. Blige performed for President Barack Obama at the annual "Christmas in Washington" concert.

The festivities, hosted by comedian George Lopez, took place at the National Building Museum and benefited the Children's National Medical Center.

"This season we celebrate that sacred moment, the birth of a child, the message of love preached to the world," Obama said from the stage, where he was joined by first lady Michelle Obama. "More than 2,000 years later, that spirit still inspires us."

The president spoke of helping those in need during the holidays, as well as honoring those in the military.

"With our men and women in uniform serving far from home, in harm's way, our fervent wish remains this season, and all seasons: Let there be peace on earth," he said.

Diamond kicked off the concert by performing "Joy to the World" and "Winter Wonderland." Blige wowed the crowd with "The Christmas Song (Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire)."

Two of the holiday songs were original numbers. Country group Sugarland performed "Gold and Green" and Rob Thomas sang "A New York Christmas."

R&B singer Usher sang "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and Internet sensation Justin Bieber performed "Someday at Christmas."

After addressing the crowd, the Obamas stayed on stage with all the performers to sing carols, starting with "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." The president wiped a tear from his eye during the sing-along.

The concert will air Dec. 20 on TNT.

AP

Sugarland's Kristian Bush, left, Mary J Blige, President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama and George Lopez sing during Christmas in Washington at the National Building Museum in Washington Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009.

Anna Nicole's doctors, boyfriend plead not guilty

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Anna Nicole Smith's two doctors and her lawyer-boyfriend pleaded not guilty Friday to drug conspiracy charges, and a judge rejected a belated move by the state attorney general and a medical board to suspend the physicians' medical licenses.

Dr. Sandeep Kapoor, Dr. Khristine Eroshevich and Howard K. Stern are accused of conspiring to illegally provide the former Playboy model with sedatives and opiates before she died. They are not charged with causing her death.

Kapoor

Eroshevich

Stern

Superior Court Judge David Wesley rejected the effort to lift the medical licenses of Kapoor and Eroshevich, saying a yearslong delay in seeking that action undermined the claim of an imminent danger to the public if the doctors continued to practice.

"If there was an imminent threat to the public, why wasn't this done?" the judge asked Deputy Attorney General E.A. Jones III.

Jones cited several reasons why the California Medical Board did not act earlier.

Among them, he said, "we did not want to interfere with the district attorney's investigation of the case."

Jones said testimony at the preliminary hearing supported the medical board request to suspend the licenses of Kapoor and Eroshevich and have them surrender their prescription forms for controlled substances.

"The defendants haven't been convicted yet," the judge reminded him.

Wesley said if the board was concerned with the doctors' practices, it could apply for an order to monitor them.

He set a tentative trial date of Feb. 5 but indicated that would be a time for hearing pretrial motions.

Outside court, Kapoor's lawyer Ellyn Garafalo said she was pleased with the ruling but troubled by the medical board's action.

"This case is being treated differently than any case, and this is about publicity," she said.

Attorney Adam Braun, who represents Eroshevich, said the allegations against her relate to one patient, Smith, years ago and "there is no reason to prevent her from practicing."

He said actions relating to the doctors' practices should await a jury's decision on the charges.

Smith died of an accidental overdose of at least nine medications in February 2007 at a Florida hotel.

The defendants were not charged until this year. In October, they were ordered to stand trial after a three-week preliminary hearing that delved deeply into Smith's troubled life and the alleged role of the defendants in her drug addiction as they were swept up in her celebrity world.

The defense lawyers contended their clients did not know Smith was an addict and argued the they tried desperately to save the depressed model in her waning years, including a period when she gave birth to a daughter and lost her grown son to a drug overdose.

Johnny Depp can't get used to winning awards

NASSAU, Bahamas (AP)—Hollywood heartthrob Johnny Depp suspects he'll never get used to receiving awards for his acting work.

Depp, best known for his Oscar-nominated role as Captain Jack Sparrow in Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean" blockbusters, made the comments Sunday night before receiving a career achievement award at the Bahamas International Film Festival.

"Whenever anybody say they are going to give me some kind of award, I'm always a little stupefied by the notion. The first thing I say is 'why?'," Depp told a small scrum of reporters. "I just go to work like anyone else, except my job happens to be a little stranger."

Lit by cameras during a red carpet event, Depp said he planned on spending Christmas on his private island ringed with white sand off Exuma.

"The place is as close to paradise as anywhere you can get," said Depp, wearing a black pinstriped suit and tinted glasses with heavy black frames.

Fellow acting superstar Sean Connery, who also owns a home in the Bahamas, presented Depp with the award at the Balmoral Club in Nassau.

The festival's founder, Leslie Vanderpool, described Depp as an "icon" who is one of the finest actors of his generation.

"What makes this tribute to Johnny even more special is that he has a home in the Bahamas and possesses a true love and appreciation for the region and culture," Vanderpool said in a statement.

Depp's diverse screen credits through the years include starring roles in "Donnie Brasco," ''Edward Scissorhands," and "What's Eating Gilbert Grape."

In September, Disney announced that a new "Pirates of the Caribbean" film is on the horizon. Depp will reprise his celebrated role as Sparrow in "Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides," slated for summer of 2011.

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Daily Rosary will be held at his residence at Papago.

DATE	TIME
Dec. 17, 2009, Thursday	7:00 pm
Dec. 18, 2009, Friday	7:00 pm
Dec. 19, 2009, Saturday	12:30 pm
Dec. 20, 2009, Sunday	7:00 pm
Dec. 21, 2009, Monday	7:00 pm
Dec. 22, 2009, Tuesday	7:00 pm
Dec. 23, 2009, Wednesday	7:00 pm

On the Last Day, Dec. 24, Eucharistic Mass will be at 7:00 am at San Vicente Church.

Your presence and prayers at these daily rosaries will be greatly appreciated.

SI YU'US MA'ASE.

**Ginen as Dolores A. Santos,
Children and Family**

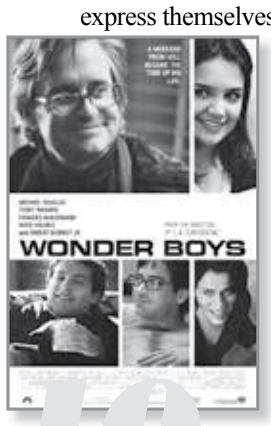
AP

From Page 18

Brooklyn, is poignant and observant, hilarious and achingly sad. Jeff Daniels is perfect as the pompous patriarch whose glory days have long since passed; he gets excellent support from Laura Linney as his wife and Jesse Eisenberg and Owen Kline as their confused kids.

9

"WALL-E" (No. 5 for 2008)—Pixar's masterpiece. The animation company maintains its impeccable track record with this irresistible, visually marvelous tale of the last robot on Earth. It's groundbreaking in its simplicity. Although the little guy and his lady love, Eve, exchange maybe three words total, director Andrew Stanton is resourceful enough to find infinite ways for them to express themselves.



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"Wonder Boys" (No. 10 for 2000)—Michael Douglas shines in the unlikely role of an English professor and novelist who's stuck, personally and professionally. The acting is categorically strong from a talented ensemble cast, especially Robert Downey Jr. The dialogue is insightful, the characters feel achingly real, and although the story takes place over a wild weekend, the situations never seem forced in director Curtis Hanson's hands. It's one to stop and watch every time it comes on TV.

'Princess and the Frog' hops to No. 1 with $25M

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"The Princess and the Frog" earned a big wet kiss from family audiences as the animated musical leaped to No. 1 with $25 million in its first weekend of nationwide release, according to studio estimates Sunday.

The Disney musical is the studio's first hand-drawn animated tale in five years, a contrast to the computer-animated films that now dominate the cartoon world.

"I've always believed that when you start with great storytelling, then the format aside doesn't mean anything," said Chuck Viane, head of distribution for Disney.

"The Princess and the Frog" took over at No. 1 from the inspiring sports tale "The Blind Side," which slipped to second-place with $15.5 million. Released by Warner Bros., "The Blind Side" raised its total to $150.2 million.

A surprise box-office sensation, "The Blind Side" is on its way to a domestic total of about $230 million, said Dan Fellman, Warner Bros. head of distribution.

1. ***"The Princess and the Frog,"*** $25 million.
2. ***"The Blind Side,"*** $15.5 million.
3. ***"Invictus,"*** $9.1 million.
4. ***"The Twilight Saga: New Moon,"*** $8 million.
5. ***"Disney's a Christmas Carol,"*** $6.9 million.
6. ***"Brothers,"*** $5 million.
7. ***"2012,"*** $4.4 million.
8. ***"Old Dogs,"*** $4.39 million.
9. ***"Armored,"*** $3.5 million.
10. ***"Ninja Assassin,"*** $2.7 million.

The film opened the same weekend as "The Twilight Saga: New Moon," but with only a fraction of that movie's blockbuster business. Audience word-of-mouth has kept crowds coming for "The Blind Side," while "New Moon" has waned to the No. 4 spot with an $8 million weekend, raising its domestic haul to $267.4 million.

Warner Bros. also had the No. 3 film with a $9.1 million debut for another inspirational sports drama, Clint Eastwood's Nelson Mandela saga "Invictus," featuring Morgan Freeman and Matt Damon. Freeman stars as the South African leader, who uses an underdog World Cup run by the country's rugby team to help unite the racially divided nation.

"The Lord of the Rings" creator Peter Jackson had a strong opening in limited release for "The Lovely Bones," which pulled in $116,000 in three theaters.

The Weinstein Co. drama "A Single Man" also started well with $216,328 in nine theaters. The film stars Colin Firth as a gay academic in the early 1960s who's planning to end his life amid grief over his lover's death.

With nearly three weeks left in the year, 2009 domestic revenues already have set a new record of $9.79 billion, surpassing the previous high of $9.68 billion in 2007, according to Paul Dergarabedian, Hollywood.com box-office analyst.

Domestic grosses should top $10 billion for the first time within the next 10 days or so. Dergarabedian estimates that Hollywood will finish the year with $10.5 billion domestically.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Hollywood.com. Final figures will be released Monday.

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The Princess and the Frog

Friday		4:30	7:20	9:35
Saturday	1:10	4:30	7:20	9:35
Sunday	1:10	4:30	7:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:30	7:20	

Anika Noni Rose, John Goodman
Comedy, Family • Rated G

Synopsis
After being summoned back to the Mouse House by Pixar founder John Lasseter in 2006, Alladin and Treasure Planet directors Ron Clements and John Musker join forces once again for this traditionally animated 2-D fantasy for the entire family, set in New Orleans. Former Dreamgirl Anika Noni Rose will voice the lead character Tiana, Disney's first African-American heroine in their long heritage of fairy tale animated features. Also in the voice cast is Keith David, lending his baritone chords to the film's villain, Dr. Facilier.

Ang Tanging Pamilya

Friday		4:10	7:30	9:50
Saturday	1:20	4:10	7:30	9:50
Sunday	1:20	4:10	7:30	
Mon thru Thurs		4:10	7:30	

AiAi Delas Alas, Joseph Estrada
Action • Rated NR

Synopsis
A young woman is happily surprised to find her long distance boyfriend in the country, with the intention of proposing to her. She accepts, and is looking forward to a happy life together. But the parents on both sides don't want to make it easy, putting all the wedding plans at risk as they wage war with each other.

★ ★ ★

Ninja Assassin

Friday		7:10	9:40
Saturday		7:10	9:40
Sunday		7:10	
Mon thru Thurs		7:10	

Rain, Rick Yune
Action • Rated R

Old Dogs

Friday		4:25	7:15	9:30
Saturday	1:25	4:25	7:15	9:30
Sunday	1:25	4:25	7:15	
Mon thru Thurs		4:25	7:15	

John Travolta, Robin Williams
Comedy, Family • Rated PG

Twilight Saga: New Moon

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:45
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:45
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon thru Thurs		4:00	7:00	

Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart
Thriller, Romance • Rated PG 13

2012

Friday		4:05	7:05	10:10
Saturday	1:05	4:05	7:05	10:10
Sunday	1:05	4:05	7:05	
Mon thru Thurs		4:05	7:05	

John Cusack, Amanda Peet
Action, Thriller • Rated PG 13

Planet 51

Friday		4:20	
Saturday	1:30	4:20	
Sunday	1:30	4:20	
Mon thru Thurs		4:20	

Gary Oldman, Jessica Biel
Comedy, Adventure • Rated PG 13

The Blind Side

Friday		4:15	7:25	10:00
Saturday	1:15	4:15	7:25	10:00
Sunday	1:15	4:15	7:25	
Mon thru Thurs		4:15	7:25	

Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw
Drama, Biopic • Rated PG 13

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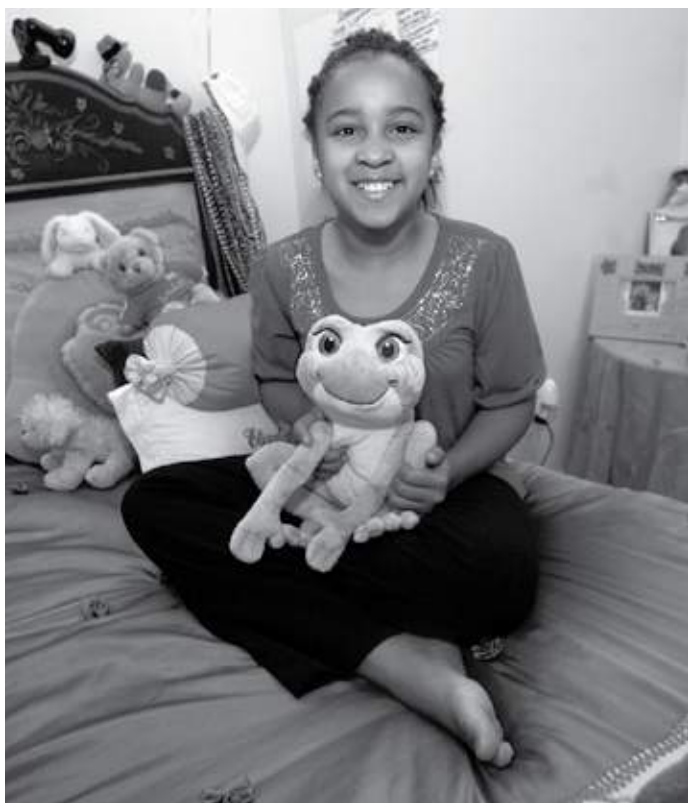
Unlikely girl voices princess-to-be in Disney film

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER



AP

In this Dec. 2, 2009, photo, Elizabeth Dampier, 10, the voice of young Tiana, the female title character in the new Walt Disney animated movie, "The Princess and the Frog," is shown at her home in in Madison, Miss.

MADISON, Mississippi—Elizabeth Dampier does not get the royal treatment at home, even though the elementary school pupil plays a princess-to-be on the big screen.

The 10-year-old Mississippi girl is the voice of young Tiana, the female title character in the new Disney animated movie, "The Princess and the Frog," opening nationwide this weekend.

Elizabeth does chores, sings in a Baptist church choir, makes snacks for her three younger siblings and is a straight-A student in a family of high achievers. Her father, Dr. Arthur R. Dampier, is an optometrist. Her mother, Jeanna, is a molecular biologist.

Sitting in the bedroom she shares with her 7-year-old sister, Elizabeth says she is a bit like her character.

"I'm fine with, like, the princess stuff," Elizabeth says. "I am like her. I don't like kissy and mooshy-gooshy stuff."

Tiana likes to cook with her father and dreams of owning a restaurant. Elizabeth says she also would like to own a restaurant when she grows up, unless she should make it big as an actress or decide to run a toy store.

Elizabeth has appeared in school productions and local commercials, but young Tiana is her first movie role. Anika Noni Rose is the voice of the older Tiana.

Elizabeth learned about the Disney part three years ago from an agent. She had three auditions in 2007 and learned in early 2008 that she had been chosen. She did the voice recording in New Orleans and Los Angeles in 2008 and 2009.

"The Princess and the Frog" is set in 1920s Louisiana, and Elizabeth learned a New Orleans accent with the help of family friends who moved out of the city after Hurricane Katrina.

"I got used to shaping my mouth in an 'O' when you want to say something. That is very different from talking like we do in Mississippi," Elizabeth says in lilting drawl.

One of the directors, Ron Clements, says Elizabeth learned her lines and took direction well.

"Her attitude was very determined and really wanting to do a good job and wanting to work really hard, which is very similar to Tiana," Clements says from California.

Fellow director John Musker says the young actress "brought a lot of natural cuteness and warmth to the part," including an endearing pronunciation of "frog."

"She said 'a fruh-aug' and that was her own thing, and we really loved that so we used that in the movie," Musker says.

Tiana is Disney's first African-American princess, and while Elizabeth understands the significance, she is not overwhelmed by it, her mom says. Jeanna Dampier calls the movie "an awesome blessing" for her daughter.

Palin makes surprise appearance on 'Tonight Show'

In this file photo taken Dec. 1, 2009, Sarah Palin talks with a supporter as she autographs copies of her book "Going Rogue" during a book signing at the Costco in Tempe, Ariz.

AP

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Sarah Palin made a surprise appearance on "The Tonight Show with Conan O'Brien" on Friday—and turned the tables on actor William Shatner.

In recent appearances on the late-night television show, Shatner has adopted a serious pose and recited some of Palin's less serious observations.

He was brought out again Friday to read passages from Palin's blockbuster "Going Rogue." The carefully selected passages included ones about rapper Kid Rock and stalking sheep.

Afterward, it was Palin's turn to read from Shatner's autobiography, "Up Till Now." The former Alaska governor's selections included one in which Shatner talks about visiting an African elephant "in my underwear."

After the readings, there appeared to be no hard feelings. The two left the stage arm-in-arm.

Reality show mom gives birth to 19th child

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—An Arkansas couple featured on the reality TV show "18 Kids and Counting" now has 19.

Cable network TLC says 43-year-old Michelle Duggar gave birth to a 1-pound, 6-ounce daughter Thursday night during an emergency cesarean section. She'd been due March 18.

TLC says the child is in stable condition at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.

The network airs the show starring Duggar, her 44-year-old husband and their brood. It says the Duggars named their 19th child and ninth daughter Josie Brooklyn. The Duggars' first grandchild was born Oct. 8.

The family lives in a 7,000-square-foot house, where they manage commercial real estate property. The couple has said they'll continue welcoming children as long as Michelle is able to have them.

AP

In this Dec. 19, 2008 file picture, Michelle Duggar is shown in Rogers, Ark.

'Hurt Locker' wins LA Critics' best-picture prize

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The Iraq War drama "The Hurt Locker" was chosen as the year's best picture Sunday by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. The film also won the group's best-director honor for Kathryn Bigelow.

The group named Jeff Bridges as best actor for the country-music tale "Crazy Heart" and Yolande Moreau as best actress for the French film "Seraphine." The lead-actor runners-up were Colin Firth for "A Single Man" and Carey Mulligan for "An Education."

Mo'Nique won the supporting-actress award for "Precious: Based on the Novel `Push' by Sapphire" and Christoph Waltz earned the supporting-actor prize for "Inglourious Basterds." The runners-up for the supporting honors were Anna Kendrick for "Up in the Air" and Peter Capaldi for "In the Loop."

The critics' prizes are among early honors on Hollywood's long run-up to the Academy Awards on March 7. Oscar nominations come out Feb. 2.

The awards are part of a flurry of honors- among them the New York Film Critics Circle prizes Monday and the Golden Globe nominations Tuesday—that help shape the Oscar picture by reinforcing front-runners or calling attention to overlooked films and performances.

While audiences generally have shied away from war-on-terror dramas, "The Hurt Locker" did solid business and earned glowing reviews. The film stars Jeremy Renner as a U.S. bomb technician in Iraq so addicted to his dangerous job that he puts the lives of colleagues at risk.

George Clooney's comedy "Up in the Air" was runner-up for best picture. Clooney's busy year did produce a win, though, as the critics picked his "Fantastic Mr. Fox" as the year's best animated film. The blockbuster "Up" was the animation runner-up.

Stephen King to pay for troops' holiday trip home

BANGOR, Maine (AP)—Author Stephen King and his wife are donating money so 150 soldiers from the Maine Army National Guard can come home for the holidays.

King and his wife, Tabitha, who live in Bangor, are paying $13,000 toward the cost of two bus trips so that members of the 3rd Battalion, 172nd Infantry Unit can travel from Camp Atterbury in Indiana to Maine for Christmas. The soldiers left Maine last week for training at Camp Atterbury. They are scheduled to depart for Afghanistan in January.

Julie Eugley, one of King's personal assistants, told the Bangor Daily News that the Kings were approached about giving $13,000.

But Stephen King thought the number 13 was a bit unlucky, so the couple pitched in $12,999 instead. Eugley chipped in $1 to make for an even $13,000.

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

President Obama gives himself a B-plus grade

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama is giving himself "a good solid B-plus" grade for his first year in office. In an interview with Oprah Winfrey that aired Sunday night, the president claimed progress on economic and international fronts. Obama says the only thing that stands in the way of giving himself a better grade is that some elements of his agenda — health care reform and putting more Americans to work — remain undone. On the ABC special "Christmas at the White House," Obama said "the biggest burden on me right now is that economic growth has happened, but job growth has not happened." He sees as a plus the fact that the United States is pulling out of Iraq and says the U.S. is on the correct path in Afghanistan.

'Precious,' 'Up,' 'Hangover' make AFI top-10 list

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The dramas "Precious" and "The Hurt Locker," the comedies "Up in the Air" and "The Hangover" and the animated tales "Up" and "Coraline" are among the top-10 movies of the year chosen by the American Film Institute. Also on the AFI's list are the dramas "The Messenger," "A Serious Man," "A Single Man" and "Sugar." Unlike other film honors, the institute does not rank films or pick one as the year's best. The filmmakers behind the top-10 choices will be honored at a luncheon Jan. 15. The AFI also picked its top-10 TV programs of the year: "The Big Bang Theory," "Big Love," "Friday Night Lights," "Glee," "Mad Men," "Modern Family," "The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency," "Nurse Jackie," "Party Down" and "True Blood."

'Avatar,' '2012' among films seeking effects Oscar

NEW YORK (AP) — The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced the 15 films vying for best visual effects consideration at the Oscars. Blockbusters such as "Avatar," ''2012" and "Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen" will compete with smaller films such as "Where the Wild Things Are," ''District 9" and "Coraline." The other semifinalists are: "Disney's A Christmas Carol," ''G-Force," ''G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra," ''Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," ''Sherlock Holmes," ''Star Trek," ''Terminator Salvation" and "Watchmen." The list was selected by the academy's visual effects branch executive committee, which will narrow the list to seven in January. The committee will eventually pick three films for Oscar nominations. The awards will be presented March 7.

Reggae star Buju Banton facing drug charge in Fla.

MIAMI (AP)—Jamaican reggae star Buju Banton is facing a drug charge in Florida. Banton, whose real name is Mark Anthony Myrie, has been in U.S. federal custody in Miami since Thursday. Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman David Melenkevitz said Sunday that Banton was arrested on a charge of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine. The charge stems from a DEA case in Tampa. An e-mail to Banton's independent record label was not immediately returned Sunday. Banton's ninth album, "Rasta Got Soul," is nominated for a Grammy. The Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation launched an online petition protesting the nomination, saying some of Banton's earlier lyrics have advocated violence against gay people.

'Family Ties' actor Bonsall charged with assault

BOULDER, Colorado (AP) — Former "Family Ties" actor Brian Bonsall has been charged in Colorado with second-degree assault after police say he repeatedly hit a friend in the head with a broken wooden stool. Bonsall, 28, could face between two to six years in prison if convicted of the charge that prosecutors filed Friday. Police arrested Bonsall last week and he's being held on $7,500 bail in Boulder. Police say Bonsall was also wanted on a warrant for missing a court hearing in 2007 on suspicion of violating bond conditions on another case. In that case, he had been sentenced to two years of probation for assaulting his girlfriend. Bonsall played the role of the youngest Keaton sibling, Andy, on the 1980s NBC television comedy starring Michael J. Fox.

Obama's brother turns down film role

GUANGZHOU, China (AP) — President Barack Obama's half brother in China says he has not accepted requests to be in the movie "Let the Bullets Fly" because he wants to focus on his writing and charity work. Mark Ndesandjo told The Associated Press on Monday the $18 million Chinese frontier film is a "high quality and popular production" directed by Jiang Wen. The movie features Hong Kong mega star Chow Yun-fat. The Guangzhou Daily News reported Monday that Ndesandjo was offered a role to star as a pastor in the film. But Ndesandjo says he neither evaluated nor accepted a request to be in the film. He says he's busy focusing on his writing and charity projects. Ndesandjo, who recently published a novel, works as a consultant in the southern city of Shenzhen.

Plans made now ease fear for elderly parents' future

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: "Afraid for the Future in San Antonio, Texas" (Oct. 25), expressed concerns about having to provide care for her aging parents and in-laws. While the sentiments you conveyed were true, your answer didn't go far enough.

"Afraid's" concerns are legitimate. While ill and elderly parents may die quickly, it's also entirely possible that they won't. People are living longer and prolonging life by any means, so the problem of long-term care and the financial and emotional burdens placed on adult children are very real.

"Afraid" and her husband need to have an honest conversation with both sets of parents about the level of help they are willing to offer. They should also research resources with their state's Department on Aging and check into supportive living facilities that accept Medicare. The preparation they do in advance will go a long way toward making their parents' elder years easier for everyone.

LAURA IN MONTGOMERY, ILL.

DEAR LAURA: You're right. Crossing one's fingers and thinking positive does not go far enough. Thank you for offering a pragmatic approach to "Afraid's" dilemma. You were among many readers who shared helpful experiences and resources. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I found a lovely assisted living facility for my parents when they were unable to care for themselves. They had a private one-bedroom apartment, and Medicaid paid for most of it. The facility had medical aides and a nurse, social activities, three meals a day plus snacks if they wished, with transportation included.

After Dad died in 2007, Mom stayed on, surrounded by friends her own age. She keeps busy with life enrichment activities. "Afraid" should check with her state's senior services for help.

GAIL IN ASHLAND, ORE.

DEAR ABBY: It is never too late to prepare for the future. That young couple should INSIST their parents see an elder care attorney NOW. This is a serious issue, and they should not risk the future of their marriage or children because their parents were selfish or ignorant. Everyone will be better off if they make an effort to educate themselves and their parents today.

BURDENED DAUGHTER IN FLORIDA

DEAR ABBY: A more proactive response would have been to encourage "Afraid" to seek information on nursing and elder care options, including free-care funds through larger nursing centers. Then she and her husband should discuss their concerns, rather than ignore them. They may find greater peace once they know all the options.

TRYING TO HELP IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR ABBY: All parties need to sit down and have a frank discussion about what the financial expectations are and what will happen if their money runs out. "Afraid" and her husband should have their parents speak to a financial adviser, who can give them a realistic picture of what their life will be like unless they make provisions now. If they cannot have their parents move in with them, that fact needs to be clearly stated.

COLLEEN IN PITTSBURGH

DEAR ABBY: My paternal grandmother lived with us while I was growing up. There were annoyances, of course, but it seemed totally natural to me. Grandma helped with us kids, making dinner and doing laundry. She always had time to read to us or do jigsaw puzzles.

When my husband's grandmother was no longer able to live on her own, she moved in with us until she passed. It was from her that I learned how to knit and how to make a pie crust from scratch. It was the most wonderful experience knowing she was happy in life. The wisdom, love and care we received from her shaped our lives.

SATISFIED IN ST. LOUIS

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

I HATE THIS TIME OF YEAR. I'VE GOT TO BE GOOD FOR TWO MORE WEEKS IF I WANT ANY GOODIES THIS CHRISTMAS! I'LL NEVER MAKE IT.
I TRY TO BE GOOD! I DO! MY HEART IS AS PURE AS DRIVEN SNOW! IT'S JUST THAT, WELL, SOMETIMES EVENTS BEYOND MY CONTROL CONSPIRE AGAINST ME!
I'M USUALLY AN INNOCENT BYSTAND... HEY, I SAW YOU ROLL YOUR EYES! SO YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, EH?!
ME?!?
BY GOLLY, EACH OF YOUR EYES WILL BE ROLLING TOWARD THE OTHER WHEN I'M THROUGH WITH YOU!
HA! I HOPE YOU ASKED SANTA FOR SOME CRUTCHES!
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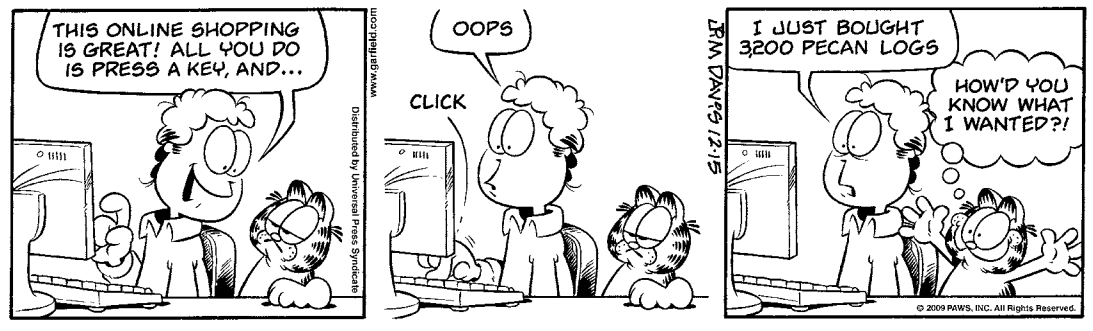
12-15

Garfield®

By Jim Davis


THIS ONLINE SHOPPING IS GREAT! ALL YOU DO IS PRESS A KEY, AND...
OOPS
CLICK
I JUST BOUGHT 3,200 PECAN LOGS
HOW'D YOU KNOW WHAT I WANTED?!
JIM DAVIS 12-15
www.garfield.com
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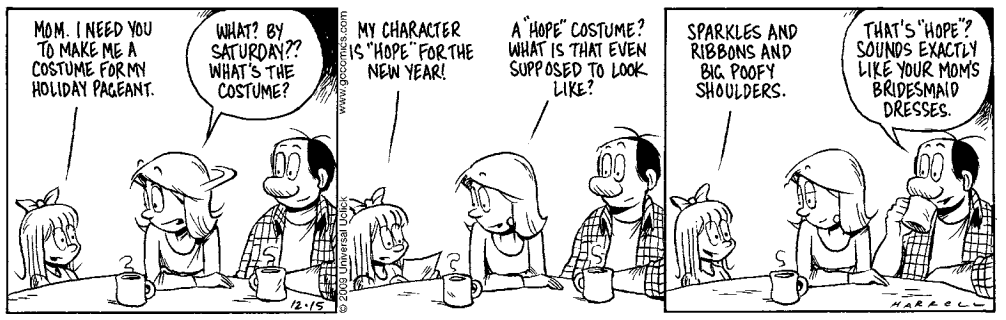
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


MOM. I NEED YOU TO MAKE ME A COSTUME FOR MY HOLIDAY PAGEANT.
WHAT? BY SATURDAY?? WHAT'S THE COSTUME?
MY CHARACTER IS "HOPE" FOR THE NEW YEAR!
A "HOPE" COSTUME? WHAT IS THAT EVEN SUPPOSED TO LOOK LIKE?
SPARKLES AND RIBBONS AND BIG POOFY SHOULDERS.
THAT'S "HOPE"? SOUNDS EXACTLY LIKE YOUR MOM'S BRIDESMAID DRESSES.
www.gocomics.com
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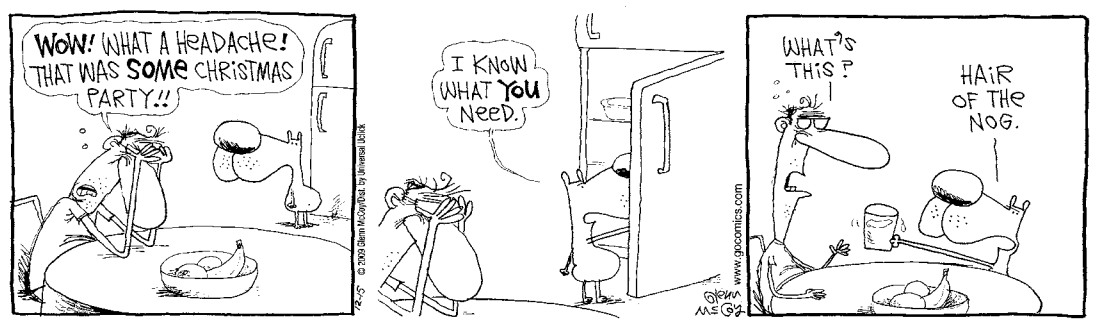
12-15

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WOW! WHAT A HEADACHE! THAT WAS SOME CHRISTMAS PARTY!!
I KNOW WHAT YOU NEED.
WHAT'S THIS?
HAIR OF THE NOG.
12-15
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www.gocomics.com

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

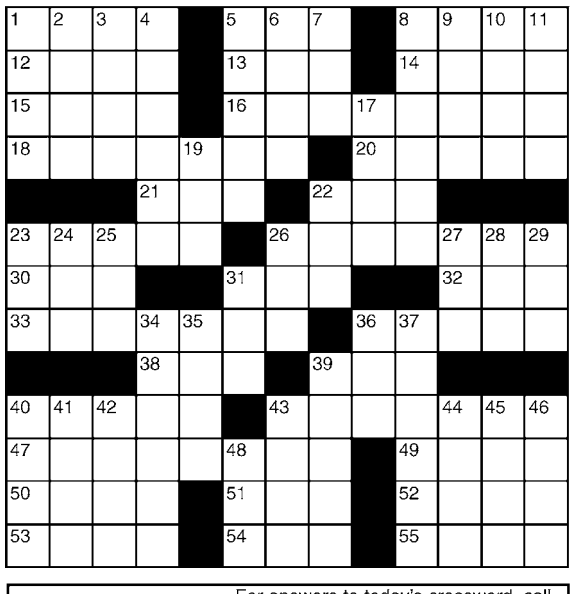
ACROSS
1 Initial stake
5 Resort
8 Obama's predecessor
12 — -garou (werewolf)
13 Sept. preceder
14 "Do — others ..."
15 Choir member
16 Pop-up's opposite
18 More healthy
20 Urban disturbances
21 "Of course"
22 21-Across, at the altar
23 Bard's creations
26 Cad
30 Resistance measure
31 Pistol
32 Actress Gardner
33 Sledgehammer, e.g.
36 Red Sea nation
38 Lubricate
39 Swindle
40 Disco-style
43 Creator of a company
47 Flatfish
49 Modern coin
50 Carry on
51 Greek H
52 "— Karenina"
53 Harem rooms
54 Nev. neighbor
55 "Monopoly" card

DOWN
1 "Woe is me!"
2 — contendere
3 Ballerina's frill
4 Namesake of a sort
5 Wise ones
6 Kitten's call
7 Past
8 Toe woe
9 Loosen
10 Cancel a dele
11 — d'oeuvres
17 Asian language
19 — Moines
22 Charged bit
23 Burst
24 Cry of discovery
25 Ostrich's cousin
26 Botanical prickle
27 Hoover, for one
28 First lady
29 Sprinted
31 Come together
34 Reason for a lack of glory?
35 "My Heart Will Go On" singer
36 Second person
37 Group of nine
39 Reef material
40 Frizzy hairstyle
41 Pleased
42 Chaplin widow
43 Crumbly cheese
44 Sand formation
45 Sea eagle
46 Street
48 Calendar abbr.

Solution time: 21 mins.

B	A	C	H	■	S	A	Y	■	S	C	U	M
E	U	R	O	■	O	D	E	■	T	A	R	O
E	R	O	S	■	C	O	L	L	A	R	D	S
F	A	C	T	O	R	■	P	O	R	O	U	S
■	■	■	E	R	A	S	■	G	E	L	■	■
C	O	L	L	A	T	E	D	■	R	I	C	O
A	N	A	■	L	I	N	E	S	■	N	O	W
P	E	N	S	■	C	O	L	L	A	G	E	N
■	■	■	C	C	I	■	R	I	O	T	■	■
S	H	E	A	R	S	■	V	E	T	O	E	D
C	O	L	L	A	P	S	E	■	E	R	G	O
O	B	O	E	■	E	E	R	■	S	C	A	N
T	O	T	S	■	W	A	Y	■	T	A	N	S

Yesterday's answer 12-15



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Garrett Wang, 41; Michael Le Vell, 45; Helen Slater, 46; Nick Beggs, 48

Happy Birthday: Assess what you see and hear and make your moves with precision, not impulse. That's what's required of you this year if you want to come out ahead. It is vital to stay on top of every little detail and not give in to wild schemes or outlandish pastimes. This is a year to try to put an end to bad habits, not to encourage them. Your numbers are 7, 13, 19, 21, 24, 32, 40

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Travel is recommended, especially if you have old friends or family to visit. You will find out some information pertinent to your background that will help you realize your true potential. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You will overspend if you go shopping. Impulsive, unnecessary purchases or overspending on lavish entertainment will set you back. Being short of cash when you need it most will cause stress. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Your focus should be on partnerships. Changes at home will bring good results if you work with—instead of against—what's already implemented by someone else. You will discover that things aren't as bad as you think if you compromise. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Put time aside for someone you feel responsible for. Don't dwell on work-related issues but don't ignore what has to be done either. It's your ability to handle several things at once that will lead to victory. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You will be the center of attention, the one everyone looks up to. Your entertaining and tasteful way of dealing with others will get you what you want, so enjoy the moment and mingle with as many people as possible. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): You are better off listening to complaints, not making them. Making changes that aren't necessary will come back to haunt you. Keep a close eye on the subtle little things going on around you. ✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Moving about, taking in the scenery or having fun with friends, neighbors or relatives should be on your agenda. You will discover something or someone unique that will influence the way you offer what you have to others. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Focus on work and mixing old ideas with new and you will find your way in a competitive economy. Your ideas will be good but sharing them too soon will lead to negativity and criticism. It's your ability to be diverse that will help you out now. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You'll be eager to do everything your way or no way. Think matters through—if you do, you will know what's best for you and let others step in and help. There is money to be made if you compromise. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): There may be a lot of unknowns and variables to deal with right now, especially pertaining to financial matters and your professional future. Avoid any restrictions from superiors or authority figures. Don't trust anyone to do your job. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Follow your dream. Don't let what someone else wants get in the way. Helping others will turn out to be the vehicle that leads to your own advancement. A love interest will change your status and your lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Be careful how much information you share with others. You may set yourself up for a disappointment if you count on someone or something that is iffy. You may need to put pressure on someone who owes you a favor. ✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are entertaining, thrill-seeking and adventurous. You are willing to try things from which others back away. You are unpredictable and intent on making a difference.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

5								7
	3		5		1		8	
		9	8		7	5		
	2						4	
			3	4	2			
	5						7	
		4	6		5	9		
	6		4		8		1	
1								2

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

3	1	9	8	4	7	2	5	6
6	5	7	3	9	2	1	8	4
8	4	2	6	5	1	9	3	7
7	9	5	2	3	4	6	1	8
2	3	1	9	8	6	7	4	5
4	6	8	7	1	5	3	9	2
9	2	3	4	7	8	5	6	1
5	8	6	1	2	3	4	7	9
1	7	4	5	6	9	8	2	3

Difficulty Level ★ 12/14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

LEAKY FAUCETS **Solution: 4 letters**

N	C	D	S	H	O	W	E	R	E	P	P	O	T	S
R	O	E	T	N	A	C	I	R	B	U	L	H	T	P
E	A	E	R	S	H	S	P	O	U	T	R	R	L	U
T	N	G	H	A	R	D	W	A	R	E	A	I	V	N
A	S	E	N	C	M	R	R	I	A	P	E	R	A	C
W	R	D	H	I	T	I	E	D	V	R	I	Ⓚ	L	T
R	L	W	I	C	N	U	C	B	S	E	Ⓝ	P	V	U
E	D	O	O	U	T	N	C	E	M	Ⓘ	L	O	E	R
N	R	L	O	R	Q	I	U	S	Ⓢ	U	B	R	D	E
C	A	F	R	S	N	I	K	R	E	A	L	D	N	N
H	I	I	W	S	E	A	L	S	T	S	E	P	I	O
B	N	A	T	U	R	N	I	H	C	A	C	R	R	Z
A	J	A	P	L	O	O	T	R	U	O	P	A	G	Z
L	L	R	E	D	N	U	E	T	S	A	W	E	P	L
L	S	S	A	R	B	W	S	I	L	I	C	O	N	E

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Ball, Bathtub, Brass, Ceramic, Drain, Drop, Escape, Escutcheon, Flow, Grease, Grind, Handle, Hardware, Install, Jaws, Kitchen, Liquids, Loosen, Lubricant, Noise, Nozzle, Parts, Pipe, Pliers, Plumber, Pour, Puncture, Repair, Running, Screw, Seals, Seat, Shower, Silicone, Sink, Spout, Stopper, Swivel, Tape, Thread, Tool, Turn, Under, Valve, Washer, Waste, Water, Worn, Wrench

Yesterday's Answer: Bookmark

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Funny bone

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Attorney for Bank of Guam

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

BANK OF GUAM,	]	**Civil Action No. 08-0126-CV**
Plainfiff,	]	
CARMEN C. CABRERA,	]	**NOTICE OF SALE**
Defendants.	]	

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 1, 2009, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in the following raw, undeveloped property, consisting of 1,098 sq.m., located in Gualo Rai, Saipan: Tract No. 21825-4-1-R1, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2098/84, the original of which was recorded September 18, 1984 as Document No. 84-1962 at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan, CNMI.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on January 20, 2010, at the hour of 10:00 am, at the Law Office of Robert T. Torres, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public and will be held in reserve.

Terms and Conditions of Sale.

1. Rights and duties of Auctioneer. Consistent with the custom and usage and applicable laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands governing auction sales with reserve, the auctioneer shall have the following rights and duties in conducting the auction sale:

   a) withdraw the property listed for sale in the public announcement before sale or before bid for such property is accepted.

   b) To adjourn the sale without notice at any time before any specific property is sold, without incurring any liability whatsoever thereby; and

   c) To reject any and all bids.

2. Bids. Tentative bids may be submitted in advance for any and all of the property listed in the notice. Such bids shall not be binding, expect that the highest of such bids will automatically be considered the opening bid for the property. Bids may be entered in person, in writing, or by telephone to Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, PO Box 5003758 CK, Saipan MP 96950, Phone: 670-234-7859'; Fax: 670-234-5749.

3. Deposit; Payment. A deposit of ten percent (10%) of the purchase price must be paid on the day of the auction sale. The remaining balance will be due within ten days of the auction sale. All payments must be made by cash, cashier's check, or credit card. Failure to make payment of the remaining balance within ten days will result in forfeiture by the buyer of the 10% deposit, and any and all of the buyer's rights, title and interest in any of the property will revert to the Bank of Guam.

4. Change of Terms. Auctioneer and the Bank of Guam reserve the right to change any of the terms of conduct an enforcement of sale by announcement, written or oral, made before the auction sale or at the commencement thereof, and such change or changes, by virtue of this clause shall be binding on any buyer by constructive notice.

5. Inspection and No Warranty. Bidders are cautioned to inspect the title and property; contact the Law Office of Robert T. Torres for scheduled viewing and inspection times. The interests of the property are being sold "AS IS" and without warranty. Failure to inspect the real property will not constitute a ground for any claim, adjustment or rescission by any buyer.

DATED this 25th day of November, 2009.

/s/ Robert T. Torrres, Auctioneer

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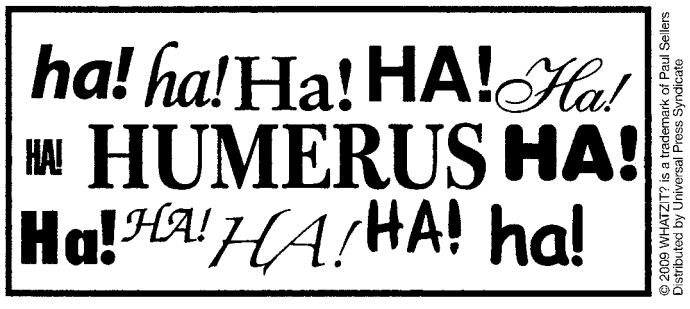

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Colts break records with 28-16 victory over Denver

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)— Peyton Manning threw three touch down passes in the first 23 minutes, then was picked off three times before the Indianapolis Colts earned their 22nd consecutive regular-season win with a 28-16 victory over the Denver Broncos on Sunday.

While the Colts (13-0) won their 114th game of the decade, breaking a tie with the 1990s San Francisco 49ers, and took a franchise record 13th consecutive home game, Denver receiver Brandon Marshall broke the league's single-game record with 21 receptions.

Marshall tied the mark on a 5-yard TD catch with 9:44 left in the game to make it 21-16 and broke the record on the Broncos' final play.

Saints 26, Falcons 23

At Atlanta, Drew Brees was 31 for 40 and threw for 296 yards and three touchdowns, and Jonathan Vilma came up with two huge defensive plays as New Orleans remained unbeaten with another tight win.

Garrett Hartley won it on a 38-yard field goal with a 4:42 remaining after Atlanta rallied from 14 points down. The offensive-minded Saints (13-0) then turned to defense to preserve another victory—Vilma came up with an interception, then doled out a big fourth-down hit on Jason Snelling to finish the Falcons' final drive.

Eagles 45, Giants 38

At East Rutherford, New Jersey, DeSean Jackson scored on a 72-yard punt return and a 60-yard pass from Donovan McNabb, sparking the Eagles to their most points this season.

The second-year wide receiver missed last week with a concussion, but was in sensational form in boosting Philadelphia (9-4) into the NFC East lead. Jackson has eight touchdowns of 50-plus yards this year, tying the NFL mark.

Vikings 30, Bengals 10

At Minneapolis, Adrian Peterson had 97 yards and two touchdowns, pushing Minnesota past mistake-prone Cincinnati.

Peterson added 40 yards receiving and set a single-season team record with 14 rushing touchdowns, moving Minnesota (11-2) within one more win of a second straight NFC North title.

Brett Favre completed 17 of 30 passes for 192 yards, one touchdown and an interception for the Vikings.

Texans 34, Seahawks 7

At Houston, Matt Schaub and Andre Johnson put together their best game of the season to help Houston snap out of a slump and keep its dwindling playoff hopes alive.

Johnson had a season-high 193 yards receiving and two touchdowns to lead the Texans (6-7) over Seattle (5-8), breaking a four-game losing streak.

Schaub had 336 yards passing before halftime and finished with 365 yards and two touchdowns.

Packers 21, Bears 14

At Chicago, Ryan Grant ran for 137 yards and two touchdowns, and Green Bay beat Chicago after letting a lead slip away.

Grant broke off a season-long 62-yard touchdown on the Packers' first play from scrimmage and scored the go-ahead TD in the fourth quarter after Nick Collins intercepted Jay Cutler.

Ravens 48, Lions 3

At Baltimore, Ray Rice ran for a career-high 166 yards and a touchdown as Baltimore enhanced its playoff hopes with a rout of Detroit.

Baltimore (7-6) built a 20-3 halftime lead behind the play of Rice, who had 155 yards rushing on only nine carries, and four catches for 53 yards. His 59-yard touchdown run made it 17-3, and the Ravens cruised to the finish in handing the hapless Lions (2-11) their 19th straight road loss.

AP

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning drops back to pass under pressure from Denver Broncos defensive end Vonnie Holliday in the first quarter of an NFL football game in Indianapolis, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009.

Patriots 20, Panthers 10

At Foxborough, Massachusetts, New England shook off a poor first half, went ahead with 1:06 left in the third quarter on Tom Brady's 5-yard touchdown pass to Benjamin Watson and beat Carolina.

The Patriots (8-5) snapped a two-game losing streak and maintained their one-game lead in the AFC East. The Panthers (5-8) lost for the third time in four games.

Bills 16, Chiefs 10

At Kansas City, Missouri, Rian Lindell kicked three field goals, and Buffalo intercepted Matt Cassel four times to beat struggling Kansas City.

Buffalo (5-8) overcame three turnovers and an ineffective passing game to finally close out a win in the fourth quarter. The Bills had lost seven times this season when they were within a touchdown headed into the final 15 minutes, pulling this one out with two interceptions in the final 2:11.

Jets 26, Buccaneers 3

At Tampa, Florida, Thomas Jones ran for 99 yards and two touchdowns, and Jay Feely kicked four field goals as the New York Jets intercepted rookie Josh Freeman three times while holding sputtering Tampa Bay to 135 yards.

Filling in for injured rookie quarterback Mark Sanchez, Kellen Clemens completed 12 of 23 passes for just 111 yards. Receiver Brad Smith had the Jets' longest completion of the day—27 yards—when he threw to Eric Smith on a fake punt play.

Dolphins 14, Jaguars 10

At Jacksonville, Florida, Chad Henne completed a team-record 17 consecutive passes and Ricky Williams ran for 108 yards and a score as Miami beat Jacksonville.

The loss snapped Jacksonville's five-game winning streak at home, and now the Jaguars (7-6) no longer control their wild-card hopes.

Chargers 20, Cowboys 17

At Arlington, Texas, Phillip Rivers hit Antonio Gates for a go-ahead touchdown in the fourth quarter to lift San Diego over Dallas.

San Diego (10-3) won its eighth straight and is on the verge of a playoff berth.

Titans 47, Rams 7

At Nashville, Tennessee, Chris Johnson ran for 117 yards and two touchdowns and took a short pass 66 yards for another score to lead Tennessee to a rout of woeful St. Louis.

The Titans (6-7) must win out and get plenty of help after their 0-6 start. But they started a three-game homestand by handing the struggling Rams (1-12) a fifth straight loss even with Vince Young sidelined by a strained right hamstring most of the game.

Redskins 34, Raiders 13

At Oakland, California, Jason Campbell threw two touchdown passes to give Washington the lead, and Quinton Ganther put it away by running for two fourth-quarter scores.

Woods' colleagues wait and wonder, like everyone

NAPLES, Fla. (AP)— Say Tiger Woods' name around his PGA Tour colleagues, and the reactions are swift and varied.

From Mark Calcavecchia, there was disappointment.

Chris DiMarco, concern. Boo Weekley, unusual silence.

And from others, when pondering the worst-case scenario—Woods never playing golf again—there is fear.

"Golf needs Tiger Woods," Brad Faxon said. "We wish them well and the best. I don't know what the best thing to do is. Nobody does. But I know him on the golf course is good for everybody."

Woods' future is uncertain, his family forever affected by the infidelity he acknowledged Friday on his Web site when announcing his "indefinite" leave from the game. With that, a long shadow of doubt has been cast over golf, which has seen a financial boon since Woods stormed onto the scene and now can only wait and wonder what'll happen with the world's No. 1 player and the game's biggest draw sidelined.

Will he come back?

When? Where? At what level?

There's far more questions than answers.

"The tour has got to be worried, because what's the definition of indefinite?" asked Greg Norman, the former world No. 1 and tournament host of the Shark Shootout this weekend. "Indefinite meaning, OK, it might be a year because a lot of issues have got to be resolved? That's the word you've kind of got to drill in on."

There was at least one definite move Sunday: Global consulting firm Accenture Ltd. became the first major sponsor to drop Woods.The firm said in a statement that Woods is "no longer the right representative" after the "circumstances of the last two weeks." The move ends a six-year relationship during which Accenture credited its "Go on, be a Tiger" campaign with boosting its image significantly.

In Dubai, a tournament official said Sunday that Woods has not yet canceled plans to play in the Desert Classic there in early February, and were willing to wait as long as possible for a decision.

When Woods was sidelined for eight months after his stirring win at the 2008 U.S. Open, television ratings were cut in half. Attendance is much higher when he is in a field, and even in a recession, it's surely easier to sell sponsors on the merits of spending dollars to back an event that features Woods than not.

There's real concern among tour players for Woods and his wife, Elin, and their two children.

There's some serious worry about the potential long-term effects for the tour as well.

"I don't think it's going to help anything, that's for sure," Nick Price said. "Especially in a recession like we're in now. It's hard enough to find sponsors out there and now to try to sell things without Tiger in the field for however long it is, it's going to be a challenge. I hope he comes back. I hope he comes back a changed man."

So do fans.

Take Dodie Mills, a 61-year-old pediatric nurse from Port Charlotte, Fla. She was at the Shootout to see Kenny Perry, among others, but says her real lure to watching and playing golf has been Woods.

Him, she wants to forgive.

The women whom Woods has reportedly been linked to, Mills has much harsher words for them.

"I think all the fame, all the money he has, all the women took advantage of it," Mills said. "He and his wife love each other. I know they do, and Tiger will do what's right. ... I can understand how a man in that position can be very easily swayed by women. I was 23 once. He's in his prime. All these women wanted a piece of him."

Mills was hardly alone in that assessment.

Noted sports attorney David Cornwell also pointed out that the women - more than 10 by some counts—who have been romantically linked to Woods in the last two weeks should bear as much of the blame as the golfer himself.

"They're looking to get paid after sex," Cornwell said in a telephone interview. "They are in a different way, outside of Tiger's very significant family responsibilities, engaging in something that's very ugly and it needs to be pointed out. Their 15 minutes are soon to be up. But the destruction that they've created with this kind of salacious detail may never be repaired."

Golf will quite likely need repair as well.

The game may not have ever seen something quite like this before, but glorious eras have certainly come and gone. Great players retire, sponsorships come and go, and golf has long survived.

Faxon is confident it'll survive this Woods saga, no matter the final outcome.

"I think the statement that he made was a great statement, but like everything else, there's still a lot of unknowns out there," Faxon said. "What does indefinite mean? I don't even know if he knows what that means. I just hope they do well. The forgotten thing is Elin and two kids and what they're going through."

Not by other tour players.

"I ain't got no comment on that Tiger," the normally loquacious Weekley said.

"I feel for Elin. I really do. I feel bad," DiMarco said. "Any woman that goes through that, I feel bad for. They're doing it privately and you have to respect that and let them do what they like to do and hopefully come back bigger and stronger and a better person."

Graeme McDowell is a rare footnote these days in the Woods saga. He's actually benefited from it, in a way.

He took Woods' spot in the 18-player Chevron World Challenge last week, finished second in the tournament that benefits Woods' foundation and essentially sealed a trip to the Masters by jumping to No. 38 in the world rankings.

And he said he's as eager to have Woods back as anyone.

"We're under no illusions. We're much more prosperous golfers for having Tiger Woods playing in our era," McDowell said. "There's plenty of global superstars on the way up to replace him. But they're not just quite ready to replace him yet. We need him to hang out for another four or five years."

Until then, they wait. Like everyone else.

"I think he's on the right track," said Calcavecchia, both a fan and friend of Woods. "I think enough's enough after the last couple weeks. Let him be and let him work on what he needs to work on."

Williams' halfcourt shot closes out Cavs' win

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP)—LeBron James scored a season-high 44 points and Mo Williams hit a back-breaking halfcourt shot in the fourth quarter to help the Cleveland Cavaliers close out a 102-89 win against the Oklahoma City Thunder on Sunday.

Williams tracked down the ball after Thabo Sefolosha had tipped it into the backcourt, then turned and fired a 48-footer with coach Mike Brown yelling to him as the shot clock ran down. The shot earned him a look of disbelief and a congratulatory hand slap from James, and it gave Cleveland its largest lead to that point at 94-87.

Williams finished with 22 points, half of them coming in the fourth quarter.

Kevin Durant led Oklahoma City with 29 points and Jeff Green scored a season-high 26. Russell Westbrook added 10 points.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers Mo Williams, center, is fouled as he cuts between Oklahoma City Thunder forward Jeff Green, left, and forward Nick Collison, right, in the second quarter of an NBA basketball in Oklahoma City, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2009.

Grizzlies 118, Heat 90

At Miami, Rudy Gay scored a career-high 41 points and Marc Gasol made all seven of his shots on the way to a 16-point, 15-rebound effort as Memphis enjoyed a rare road win.

Gay made 15 of 28 shots, topping his previous career best by five points, and became just the fourth player since January 2007 to score at least 40 against Miami in a regular-season game. Jamal Crawford (40) did so on Dec. 1, 2008, while LeBron James (42) and Ben Gordon (43) each accomplished the feat last March.

Memphis also got 16 points from O.J. Mayo and 13 from Zach Randolph. Dwyane Wade scored 25 points for Miami.

Hawks 130, Nets 107

At Atlanta, Maurice Evans scored 22 points, and Joe Johnson added 21 points and 10 assists to help Atlanta win its fourth straight.

Devin Harris, who started despite a sprained left pinky finger, scored 23 points for the Nets, who allowed a season high in points in their third consecutive loss — dropping the NBA's worst record to 2-22.

Raptors 101, Rockets 88

At Toronto, Chris Bosh led Toronto with 27 points, Hedo Turkoglu had a season-high 23, and Jarrett Jack added 17 points, eight rebounds and eight assists as Toronto downed Houston.

Carl Landry scored 25 points for Houston, and Luis Scola had 21 points and 15 rebounds.

Spurs 115, Clippers 90

At Los Angeles, Tim Duncan scored 21 points before sitting out the fourth quarter to lead San Antonio to victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Duncan departed with 1:48 left in the third quarter after he was accidentally elbowed on the right side of the head by teammate Matt Bonner with the Spurs leading 83-73.

Richard Jefferson and Manu Ginobili each had 17 points for San Antonio, which has won three straight and eight of 11.

Baron Davis finished with 20 points for the Clippers.

Refs spokesman criticizes Donaghy, alleges threats

NEW YORK (AP)—The lead negotiator and spokesman for the NBA's referees says Tim Donaghy made threats against him, and that the disgraced former official's accusations about his colleagues shouldn't be believed because he is a "compulsive liar."

Lamell McMorris said Thursday that Donaghy also threatened fellow referees, whom he has accused of misconduct during a series of interviews this week.

"His attacks have been malicious and his claims continue to be unfounded," McMorris said in a statement. "Donaghy is a convicted felon and a compulsive liar with loyalty to no one but himself."

McMorris declined to give specifics of the threats, but indicated to The Associated Press they came when Donaghy called his office after McMorris put out statements on behalf of the referees after the Donaghy betting scandal broke in 2007.

McMorris also cited Donaghy's "pattern of intimidation" and issues with his temper, including a dispute with his neighbors while living in Philadelphia that the NBA investigated. His statement said Donaghy's life "has been marked by a pattern of dishonesty," noting that he was forced to return to prison after he was accused of violating terms of his probation.

This was a difficult week for the referees union, with Donaghy appearing on "60 Minutes" and ESPN to give interviews to coincide with the release of his book. Donaghy insisted he never had to make calls to affect games he bet on because he knew of biases certain officials had against certain players that would influence the way the games would be called.

But McMorris said investigations into those claims found no criminal activity by anyone other than Donaghy, who admitted betting on games he officiated and was sentenced to 15 months for conspiracy to engage in wire fraud and transmitting betting information through interstate commerce.

"The release of his new book and his various media interviews are more attempts by Tim Donaghy to cast a shadow over the NBA," McMorris said.

"The referees of the NBA have fully cooperated with all federal and internal investigations regarding Donaghy's unfounded allegations. These investigations have shown that, other than Donaghy, no referee has ever bet on an NBA game, shared confidential game information with other gamblers, or sought to direct a game's outcome for personal gain."

Messages seeking comment were left late Thursday night with Executive Prisons Consultants, which had been advising Donaghy.

The NBA has said it will forward any new claims by Donaghy to its investigators for further review. McMorris said the referees are committed to working with the league to uphold their professionalism.

"Tim Donaghy's actions reflect the kind of man he is, and those actions certainly do not reflect the character exhibited on a day-to-day basis by the honest people that currently make up the NBA officiating staff," McMorris said.

MLB BRIEFS

Indians sign Reyes, Miller to minor league deals

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cleveland Indians signed right-handers Anthony Reyes and Adam Miller to minor league contracts on Sunday. Reyes, whose contract includes a non-roster invitation to spring training, is currently rehabbing from reconstructive surgery on his pitching elbow in June after going 1-1 with a 6.57 ERA in eight starts for the Indians last season. Miller underwent reconstructive surgery on his right middle finger in November, his third surgery on the digit in 2009. Reyes, Miller and righty Jose Veras were not tendered contracts by Saturday's deadline and were removed from Cleveland's 40-man roster.

Blue Jays agree to deals with Bautista, McGowan

The Toronto Blue Jays have agreed to terms on one-year contracts with utility player Jose Bautista and pitcher Dustin McGowan. Bautista agreed to a $2.4 million deal for 2010, while McGowan, who missed all of 2009 recovering from right shoulder surgery, will get $500,000, the Blue Jays announced in a statement Sunday. The 29-year-old Bautista will return for his third season with Toronto. A native of the Dominican Republic, he hit .235 with 13 home runs and 40 RBIs in 2009. McGowan, who had surgery in 2008 to repair a torn labrum in his shoulder and was again slowed by a knee operation this past summer, has a career record of 20-22 with a 4.71 ERA. The Blue Jays also signed outfielder Joey Gathright and catcher Raul Chavez to minor league contracts. ***(AP)***

NBA BRIEFS

Knicks sign free agent forward Jonathan Bender

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Knicks have signed free agent Jonathan Bender, marking the oft-injured forward's return to the NBA after a three-year absence. Knicks president Donnie Walsh announced the move in a statement Sunday. The 7-foot Bender enjoyed his best season in 2001-02, when he averaged career highs of 7.4 points and 3.1 rebounds in 78 games. But injuries forced Bender to miss 172 games over the next three seasons before chronic knee pain sidelined him indefinitely in February 2006. Bender was selected out of high school by Toronto with the fifth overall pick in the 1999 draft and was acquired by Indiana in a trade on Aug. 1, 1999. He formed a relationship with former Pacers president Walsh during their time together in Indiana. "Jonathan has worked extremely hard in preparing himself for a return to the NBA," Walsh said in the statement. "I know him to be a young man of the highest character from my relationship with him that dates back 10 years to his rookie year and I think he will be a fine addition to our team both on and off the court."

Heat's Richardson sidelined with bad hammy

MIAMI (AP)—Quentin Richardson has been held out of the Miami Heat's game against the Memphis Grizzlies with a sore right hamstring. Yakhouba Diawara, who played in only one of Miami's first 21 games of the season, started at forward in place of Richardson. Heat guard Dwyane Wade was in the lineup Sunday despite being bothered by a sore right wrist, and Miami also had center Jermaine O'Neal back following a two-game absence for a family funeral.

Nets' Douglas-Roberts awaiting MRI on ailing knee

ATLANTA (AP)—Coach Kiki Vandeweghe says the New Jersey Nets are awaiting results of an MRI that Chris Douglas-Roberts had on his left knee. Vandeweghe wasn't sure how Douglas-Roberts, who scored seven points in 38 minutes of a 107-91 loss Friday at Indiana, was injured. Trenton Hassell started in Douglas-Roberts' small forward spot Sunday against Atlanta. Douglas-Roberts is averaging 16.2 points. New Jersey comes into its game against the Hawks with an NBA-worst 2-21 record.

STEELE

From Page 28

Kennedy's dig moved them a point away from wrapping up the match, which ended when Johnson went for a kill and was blocked by the net.

Steele and Kennedy were seeded first in the playoffs and won their first game in the Round of 16 against the tandem of J.R. Gechig and Azumi Ishida, 11-8. Next up for the eventual champions was the pair of Mili Saiki and Russ Quinn, 11-9. Kennedy and Steele then advanced to the semifinals of the winner's bracket after topping Nicole LeBlanc and Greg Elliot, 11-9.

Kennedy and Steele, who were paired with Dale Roberts and Laurie Peterka, respectively, last year, gained the first finals seat after beating Johnson and Matson in the semifinals, 11-9.

Johnson and Matson dropped to the loser's bracket and had to thwart Kim Peterson and Jazz Roscow in a do-or-die game, 11-8, to arrange a rematch against Kennedy and Steele.

Roscow and Peterson settled for third, while LeBlanc and Elliot finished fourth.

Last year's champions Melody Matson and Bruce Berline ended up only in sixth place after losing to LeBlanc and Elliot in the loser's bracket quarterfinals.

The weekend tournament was organized by Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association and is a unique one, as it is played on a female's height net and male participants cannot go for a spike inside the 10-foot line and are prohibited from blocking the ball.

Meanwhile, NMIVA would like to thank Hyatt Regency Saipan, IT&E, and Pacific Trading Co. for supporting the one-day event.

ADVANCE

From Page 28

in the league opener last week was still too much for Cholos with the former having more talent and a deeper bench. The best that Cholos could do against Prospect was move within eight in the second period 35-27, which ended with the latter still on top by double digits, 43-32.

Prospects made it a 14-point lead, 61-47, with the Bonbon Cadagat showing some of his flashy moves and canning six of his 12 points in that canto.

In the fourth quarter, it was Perry Inos' turn to run the show, as he drilled three straight baskets at one point and tallied 10 of his 18 markers in the final period. Quincy Johnson also scored in succession, firing five straight points and finishing with 12.

Two other Prospects players logged double figures with Jeff Pagarao recording 14 and Ryan Sanciangco tallying 12. Pagarao posted 10 of his total points in the first period, leading Prospects to a 29-14 advantage at the end of the opening quarter.

Won Joo Jung scored 17 points for Cholos, who dropped to a 0-2 start. Josh Sablan and Pedro Lizama chipped in 13 and 10 markers, respectively.

In the second game, Advance X-Terminators led from start to finish en route to a 95-85 victory over Trinity Estate.

Jun Estolas exploded for 11 straight points in the first period, which ended with X-Terminators ahead, 25-11. In that scoring spree, Estolas canned three triples and he added two more shots from downtown in the second half keeping Advance's 14-point lead at halftime, 50-36.

Advance widened the gap to 17 in the third period, 74-47, with Freddie Pelisamen nailing 10 of the team's first 12 points and Estolas burying two more triples.

Estolas and company slowed down in the fourth, allowing Trinity to cut the deficit to a more decent one, but still the latter absorbed its second loss in as many games.

First Game

Advance 95 – Estolas 23, Pelisamen 22, Gapor 10, Rebuyon 10, Talania 9, Muleta 6, Guiab 4, Opone 4.

Trinity Estate 85 – Hernandez 26, Herrera 26, Dulfo 9, Dimafelix 9, Manual 5, Valiente 4.

Scoring by quarters: 25-11, 50-36, 74-57, 95-85.

Second Game

Prospect 85 – Inos 18, Johnson 14, Pagarao 14, Sanciangco 12, Cadagat 12, Barbo 6, Lauron 4, Paul 4.

Cholos 61 – Jung 17, Sablan 13, Lizama 10, Baculod 9, Kapileo 4, George 4, Buchun 4.

Scoring by quarters: 29-15, 43-32, 61-47, 85-61.

RAPHAEL

From Page 28

other youth keglers who vied for the December title.

The Saipan Southern High School student carded 704 pinfalls in four games for a 26-pinfall win over November winner Manuel Aldan (678). Marion MacKenzie finished third with a total of 671 pinfalls, followed by Leeanne Yarobwemal (610), Troy Verdaguer (569), Zack Cruz (568), Jacob Delos Reyes (568), and Nikko Gutierrez (436).

Zapanta had a strong showing in the last two games to secure this month's title. He knocked down 211 pins in Game 3 and saved his best for last, tallying 229 pinfalls in Game 4. He started slow with 128 pinfalls in Game 1 and improved his performance a bit in Game 2 with 136 pinfalls for an average of 176.

Aldan knocked down 160 on Games 1 and 4, had his best game in Game 2 (186 pinfalls), and recorded 172 in Game 3 for an average of 169.5. MacKenzie averaged 167.75 and had the best score in Game 1 with 186 pinfalls. He had 150, 173, and 162 in the last three games.

In the adults tournament, Yho Villavicencio and Robert Talavera were leading the race after Sunday's roll-off.

Villavicencio boosted her chances for the Budweiser December Queen of the Lanes tiara after a four-game total of 677 pinfalls. She enjoyed a nine-pinfall lead against Diane Chong, who tallied 656 after four games. In third to sixth places were Carol MacKenzie (637), Gigi Zapanta (605), Gloria Omechelang (581), and Lilian Gutierrez (554).

If Villavicencio's score was unbeaten in yesterday's roll-off, she gets to keep the December title. The adults roll-offs are played for two days and bowlers can participate on both days, but only the higher score is counted.

Talavera was ahead of nine other male bowlers after the first roll-off for the King of the Lanes tournament. He compiled 905 pinfalls in four games for a 126-pinfall led over Alex Castro, who posted only 779 pinfalls. Russel Zapanta finished third with 741 pinfalls.

Talavera took the lead in the first day of the roll-off after recording 200-plus pinfalls in three games. He had 278 pinfalls in Game 1 and 204 and 235 in Games 3 and 4, respectively. Talavera logged 188 in Game 2 for an average of 226.25 pinfalls.

YAMADA

From Page 28

Hitz recorded a five-run bottom of the second inning to cut the lead to five. However, that was the best that Hitz could do, as Freedom Air shut out the former in the last three innings.

Yamada finished with a 3-for-4 performance at the plate and scored two runs. His two-run double in the fifth inning helped Freedom Air pad the lead to 18-6. Ken Villagomez also went 3-for-4 at bat, tallied three runs and had one triple. Jess Borja added three RBIs on a 2-for-3 performance at bat, while Mabel Ngirngemelas also hit 2-for-3 and chipped in two RBIs.

The win was Freedom Air's first in two games, while Hitz lost its debut.

Chura 13, G-Ballers 7

Chura notched its second win in as many games and joined the four-way tie for the lead after downing G-Ballers, 13-7.

Shortstop Pete Tomakane was perfect at the plate to lead Chura to an undefeated 2-0 record, tying Natibu, Island Rebels, and San Roque. He was 4-for-4, scored two runs and had two RBIs. Myron Sablan and Ben Mesa both hit 2-for-4 and chipped in one RBI each.

Second baseman Ray Terlaje led G-Ballers' losing cause, going 3-for-3, including a solo homer at the bottom of the third. His two-run double in the first inning gave G-Ballers their first and lone taste of the lead before a six-run second inning put Chura in the driver's seat. G-Ballers scored no more than one run in the next five innings, failing to regain the lead.

Ur Balls 22, Berdax 11

Ur Balls used a 13-run bottom of the first to bounce back and beat Berdax, 22-11.

Ur Balls was down, 1-11, after two and a half innings when it scored one run after another at the bottom of the third to seize the lead, 14-11. Mike Taitano, Joe Lizama, and Harlan Reyes had two RBIs each in that run and Ur Balls preserved the lead and the win after shutting out Berdax in the last three innings.

Leftfielder Giovanni Ayuyu was perfect at the plate for Ur Balls, hitting 4-for-4. He gave Ur Balls its lone run in the first inning on his solo-homer and then went on to score two more runs and post three RBIs.

Lizama also had three RBIs after going 3-for-4 and drilling a two-run homer in the fourth inning.

Natibu 13, Lancheros 3

Natibu joined Island Rebels, San Roque, and Chura in the lead after thumping Lancheros, 13-3.

Natibu held Lancheros to one run in the first four innings to take control of the game and end it after only five innings. Lancheros reached home plate only once in the first four innings with Bill Aguon's single driving Jack Diaz home. In contrast, Natibu had already scored 11 runs after four innings and added two more at the top of the fifth to force Lancheros to nail at least 12 runs to extend the game.

Lancheros fell 10 runs short, as it scored only two runs at the bottom of the fifth on an Anson Jones single and off a Natibu error.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	19	4	.826	–
Toronto	11	15	.423	9 1/2
New York	8	15	.348	11
Philadelphia	5	18	.217	14
New Jersey	2	22	.083	17 1/2

Southeast Division

Atlanta	17	6	.739	–
Orlando	17	6	.739	–
Miami	11	11	.500	5 1/2
Charlotte	9	13	.409	7 1/2
Washington	7	14	.333	9

Central Division

Cleveland	17	7	.708	–
Milwaukee	11	11	.500	5
Detroit	11	12	.478	5 1/2
Indiana	8	13	.381	7 1/2
Chicago	8	14	.364	8

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	17	7	.708	–
San Antonio	12	9	.571	3 1/2
Houston	13	10	.565	3 1/2
New Orleans	10	12	.455	6
Memphis	10	13	.435	6 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	17	7	.708	–
Utah	14	9	.609	2 1/2
Portland	14	11	.560	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	12	10	.545	4
Minnesota	3	21	.125	14

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	18	4	.818	–
Phoenix	16	8	.667	3
Sacramento	10	12	.455	8
L.A. Clippers	9	13	.409	9
Golden State	7	16	.304	11 1/2

Yesterday's Games
Toronto 101, Houston 88
Atlanta 130, New Jersey 107
Memphis 118, Miami 90
Cleveland 102, Oklahoma City 89
San Antonio 115, L.A. Clippers 90

NBA LEADERS

SCORING

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	24	253	201	728	30.3
Durant, OKC	21	202	165	594	28.3
James, CLE	23	224	166	648	28.2
Bryant, LAL	22	230	131	612	27.8
Nowitzki, DAL	24	232	173	655	27.3
Wade, MIA	21	184	183	569	27.1
Ellis, GOL	23	221	111	568	24.7
Granger, IND	17	130	102	414	24.4
Bosh, TOR	25	202	188	598	23.9
Roy, POR	25	183	133	530	21.2
Jennings, MIL	22	172	68	462	21.0
Johnson, ATL	22	181	71	461	21.0
Arenas, WAS	21	154	91	435	20.7
Boozer, UTA	23	189	90	468	20.3
Gay, MEM	21	163	85	427	20.3
Harrington, NYK	23	167	90	463	20.1
Evans, SAC	21	155	100	421	20.0
Iguodala, PHL	23	161	98	452	19.7
Williams, UTA	21	155	76	411	19.6
Lopez, NJN	23	165	119	449	19.5

FG PERCENTAGE

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	107	163	.656
Howard, ORL	136	211	.645
Oden, POR	92	152	.605
Gasol, MEM	116	192	.604
Hilario, DEN	120	206	.583
Horford, ATL	119	206	.578
Bynum, LAL	138	240	.575
Lee, NYK	168	293	.573
Garnett, BOS	151	267	.566
Landry, HOU	132	234	.564

REBOUNDS

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Wallace, CHA	22	51	218	269	12.2
Howard, ORL	23	87	194	281	12.2
Bosh, TOR	25	95	208	303	12.1
Noah, CHI	22	86	173	259	11.8
Camby, LAC	21	57	175	232	11.0
Boozer, UTA	23	48	204	252	11.0
Haywood, WAS	21	92	131	223	10.6
Duncan, SAN	18	55	135	190	10.6
Randolph, MEM	22	105	123	228	10.4
Lee, NYK	23	52	182	234	10.2

ASSISTS

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	24	267	11.1
Paul, NOR	14	146	10.4
Williams, UTA	21	213	10.1
Rondo, BOS	23	218	9.5
Kidd, DAL	24	215	9.0
James, CLE	23	187	8.1
B. Davis, LAC	21	148	7.0
Westbrook, OKC	21	144	6.9
Arenas, WAS	21	143	6.8
Duhon, NYK	23	144	6.3

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	8	5	0	.615	348	234
Miami	7	6	0	.538	292	306
N.Y. Jets	7	6	0	.538	275	211
Buffalo	5	8	0	.385	215	271

South

x-Indianapolis	13	0	0	1.000	359	217
Jacksonville	7	6	0	.538	235	287
Tennessee	6	7	0	.462	293	323
Houston	6	7	0	.462	311	273

North

Cincinnati	9	4	0	.692	264	217
Baltimore	7	6	0	.538	319	218
Pittsburgh	6	7	0	.462	278	244
Cleveland	2	11	0	.154	158	315

West

San Diego	10	3	0	.769	362	259
Denver	8	5	0	.615	256	230
Oakland	4	9	0	.308	155	316
Kansas City	3	10	0	.231	206	342

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	373	273
Dallas	8	5	0	.615	296	233
N.Y. Giants	7	6	0	.538	341	331
Washington	4	9	0	.308	234	251

South

x-New Orleans	13	0	0	1.000	466	274
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	302	305
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	225	282
Tampa Bay	1	12	0	.077	190	356

North

Minnesota	11	2	0	.846	389	243
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	344	243
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	247	291
Detroit	2	11	0	.154	209	406

West

Arizona	8	4	0	.667	297	234
San Francisco	5	7	0	.417	245	233
Seattle	5	8	0	.385	250	301
St. Louis	1	12	0	.077	146	361

x-clinched division

Yesterday's Games
Houston 34, Seattle 7
Green Bay 21, Chicago 14
Baltimore 48, Detroit 3
New Orleans 26, Atlanta 23
Buffalo 16, Kansas City 10
Indianapolis 28, Denver 16
New England 20, Carolina 10
N.Y. Jets 26, Tampa Bay 3
Miami 14, Jacksonville 10
Minnesota 30, Cincinnati 10
Tennessee 47, St. Louis 7
Washington 34, Oakland 13
San Diego 20, Dallas 17
Philadelphia 46, N.Y. Giants 38

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

UBA CAGING STANDINGS

Advance	2	0
Prospect	2	0
Ol'Aces	1	0
Diamond	1	0
Hoopaholics	0	1
Noni Saipan	0	1
Trinity	0	2
Cholos	0	2

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Island Rebels	2	0
San Roque	2	0
Chura	2	0
Natibu	2	0
SaiPal	1	0
6-Pack	1	1
Ur Balls	1	1
Ramblers	1	1
Red Eye	1	1
Go For Broke	1	1
Man Amigos	1	1
Team Familia	1	1
Lancheros	1	1
Team Fuegu	1	1
Freedom Air Flyers	1	1
Blazers	0	1
Calikano-Falcons	0	1
Hitz	0	1
X-Terminators	0	2
G-Ballers	0	2
Berdax	0	2

3rd Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Riders negotiate the road descending from Kagman to Capital Hill.

Alexandre Bagenov leads the main peloton as they cruise Airport Road during the 3rd Annual Hell of the Marianas Century Cycle early this month.

2008 champion Mieko lead a group of runners pedaling up to Papago.

Three riders near the turn to San Vicente.

Former Olympian Amber Halliday of Australia sticks with the main peloton heading to Talafofo.

Russ Quinn celebrates his finish.

Hell volunteers pose for a group photo while waiting for finishers.

Russia's Eugeniy Smarchkov pours water on his back to cool off.

John Jones, left, and Ben Babauta are all smiles as they wait for the start of the early morning race at the Pacific Islands Club south parking lot.

Three riders make a turn to the crooked road to Kingfisher Golf Links.

Colts break records with 28-16 victory over Denver

Peyton Manning threw three touch down passes in the first 23 minutes, then was picked off three times before the Indianapolis Colts earned their 22nd consecutive regular-season win with a 28-16 victory over the Denver Broncos on Sunday. 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Williams' halfcourt shot closes out Cavs' win

LeBron James scored a season-high 44 points and Mo Williams hit a backbreaking halfcourt shot in the fourth quarter to help the Cleveland Cavaliers close out a 102-89 win against the Oklahoma City Thunder on Sunday. 25

Steele, Kennedy top grass v'ball tourney

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Heather Kennedy goes for a hit at the net during her and teammate Randy Steele's playoff game against Nicole LeBlanc and Greg Elliot in the 3rd Annual Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament on Saturday at Navy Hill's baseball field.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Veterans Randy Steele and Heather Kennedy's first team-up turned out to be a strong one, as the duo ruled the 3rd Annual Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament on Saturday at Navy Hill's baseball field.

After topping the 24-team draw elimination round, Steele and Kennedy went undefeated in the playoffs en route to claiming the championship and the $200 purse in the weekend tournament.

Steele and Kennedy, who had different teammates when they joined last year's tournament and made it to the playoffs, too, secured this year's championship after slipping past young guns Quincy Johnson and Emily Matson, 17-15.

The eventual champions entered the finals with a twice-to-beat advantage and it seemed Johnson and Matson may force a Game 2 when they led in the opening part of the title match. However, Kennedy and Steele's good ball placement and hustle at the backline prevailed in the end.

See STEELE on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Prospect's Ryan Sanciangco drives to the baseline against two Cholos defenders during their game in the UBA caging on Friday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Advance, Prospect rout opponents

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

After a rousing debut, Prospects had another easy assignment, thumping Cholos, 85-61 during their game in the Inaugural 2009 UBA/Miller Lite Men's Basketball League on Friday at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Prospects, which hammered Trinity Estate, 98-36,

See ADVANCE on Page 26

Raphael is back, tops December roll-off

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Raphael Zapanta returned to action and capped his 2009 dominance in youth bowling with a victory in the Fiji Water December Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tournament on Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Zapanta swept the first 10 editions of the monthly roll-off before missing the November tournament due to flu. In the final roll-off, Zapanta made sure he will have the last laugh as he bested seven

See RAPHAEL on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Top 3 finishers in the December youth roll-off are joined by Saipan Bowling Association president Jerry Tan, left, during a brief awards ceremony on Sunday at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Yamada lifts Freedom Air past Hitz

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Shane Yamada made six RBIs, leading Freedom Air to an 18-6 victory over Hitz in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League on Friday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

His three-run homer at the top of second inning gave Freedom Air an early 11-1 lead before

See YAMADA on Page 26

Freedom Air's Shane Yamada, seen here warming-up for a game, had six RBIs in their 18-6 victory over Hitz in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League on Friday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO